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States can sub-classify SCs/STs: Supreme Court

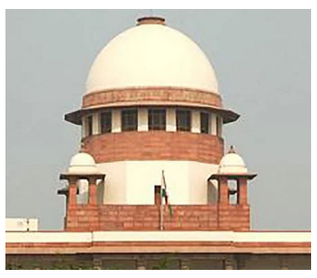
SC says sub-classification must be based on empirical data

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and economically more backward.

A seven-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, by a majority of 6:1, set aside the apex court's five-judge bench verdict of 2014 in the EV Chinnaiah vs State of Andhra Pradesh case which had held that no sub-classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs) can be allowed as they are a 'homogeneous class in themselves.'

"The State in exercise of its power under Articles 15 (non-discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth) and Article 16 (equality of opportunity in public employment) of the Constitution is free to identify the different degrees of social backwardness and provide special provisions (such as reservation) to achieve the specific degree of harm identified," held the CJI in his 140-page judgement.



Supreme Court **PHOTO: PTI**

- Supreme Court ruled that states must identify 'creamy layer' in the SCs and STs and exclude them from quota benefits.

The six judgements, running into 565 pages, were penned on the contentious issue by the CJI, who wrote for himself and Justice Manoj Misra, and Justices BR Gavai, Vikram Nath, Pankaj Mithal, Satish Chandra Mishra and Justice Bela M Trivedi.

Except for Justice Trivedi, the other five judges concurred with the findings of the CJI. Justice Trivedi, in her 85-page dissenting judgement, said it is only Parliament which can include a caste in the SC list or exclude it, and states are not empowered to tinker with it. The SCs, she ruled, are a "homogeneous class" incapable of being sub-classified further.

The CJI made it clear that any decision to sub-classify SCs to grant more quota benefits to a particular caste inside the category can be reviewed judicially. Overruling the Chinnaiah verdict, the CJI dealt with the scope of sub-classification of SCs and said the objective of any form of affirmative action, including the sub-classification, is to provide "substantive equality of opportunity for the backward classes". The top court had reserved the verdict on 8 February on pleas seeking review of the Chinnaiah judgement, which had ruled all SCs which suffered ostracization, discrimination and humiliation for centuries represented a homogeneous class incapable of being sub-categorised. *—PTI*

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HIGHLIGHTS

- SC overrules 2004 judgment of five-judge bench in EV Chinnaiah case
- SC says Article 14 permits sub-classification of class which is not similarly situated
- SC says historical and empirical evidence demonstrates that Scheduled Castes are a socially heterogeneous class
- SC says states must collect data on inadequacy of representation
- SC bats for exclusion of creamy layer even from Scheduled Castes

...AND IT LEAKS

The heavy rains in Delhi on Wednesday caused water to leak into the lobby of the newly inaugurated Parliament, raising concerns about the weather resilience of the structure, which was built at a cost of Rs 971 crore in 2023 ***PHOTO: PTI >>>More on Page 3***

CM recuses from Cabinet meet on Guv's scam notice

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday recused himself from a Cabinet meeting which discussed a "show-cause notice" issued to him by the Governor asking him to explain why prosecution sanction must not be accorded in connection with the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam.' Home Minister G Parameshwara said Siddaramaiah authorised Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to chair the meeting. Parameshwara said since the Cabinet was slated to discuss the notice issued to him by the Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Ministers requested the Chief Minister not to attend it. "The Cabinet meeting has to happen in his (Siddaramaiah's) absence," he said. "We (Ministers) requested him not to attend (the Cabinet meeting)," Parameshwara said, adding, the Chief Minister should not be part of the Cabinet when it discusses the notice issued to him *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

CBI files 1st chargesheet in NEET paper leak

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The CBI has filed its first charge sheet in the alleged NEET UG examination paper leak case naming 13 people as accused, officials said Thursday. The charge sheet lists that the accused were allegedly involved in the paper leak and other irregularities, they said. The CBI has kept the probe open, they said. The central probe agency, which is investigating the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam, has lodged six FIRs. The FIR from Bihar pertains to paper leak while the remaining ones from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra are regarding impersonation of candidates and cheating. This year, the exam was conducted on 5 May at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. *—PTI*

Massive prisoner swap involving US, Russia underway

WASHINGTON, 1 AUG

A massive prisoner swap involving the United States and Russia was underway on Thursday, a person familiar with the matter said. The person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because details had not been publicly disclosed, did not specify who is included in the deal. But Americans considered by the US to be wrongfully detained in Russia include Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and Paul Whelan, a corporate security executive from Michigan. Both had been convicted of espionage charges that the US government considered baseless. The deal would be the latest exchange in the last two years between Washington and Moscow, following a December 2022 trade that brought WNBA star Brittney Griner back to the US. *—PTI*

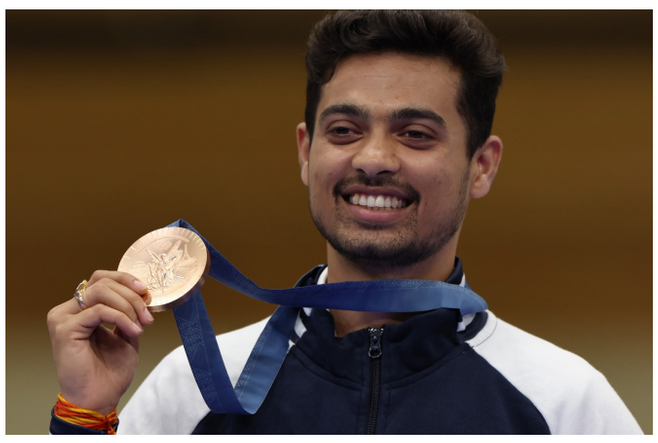
TICKET-COLLECTOR SCRIPTS HISTORY

Kusale clinches India's 1st Bronze in 50m shooting

CHATEAUROUX, 1 AUG

Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale kept his composure to stage a remarkable comeback and help the country claim its first ever Olympic bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions event of the ongoing Games here on Thursday.

Kusale shot an aggregate of 451.4 in the eight-shooter final to finish third after being placed sixth at one stage. It took the country's overall tally to three, all bronze, at the Paris Games. Kusale, who was a ticket collector and draws inspiration from cricket icon MS Dhoni, was slow to start with but fought his way back to bag the third prize in his very first appearance in the world's biggest sporting spectacle. He was in the fourth place after the first standing series. Considered a high-scoring round, Kusale's first shot of the final in kneeling was a lowly 9.6, but he made an excellent recovery after that.



Bronze medalist Swapnil Kusale **PHOTO: PTI**

A 10.6 and 10.3 saw Kusale jump momentarily into the second place. But a 9.1 and a 10.1 in his next attempts pushed him back to fourth. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

RaGa, Priyanka in Wayanad as death toll touches 276

WAYANAD, 1 AUG

Rescuers raced against time under harsh conditions to search for survivors trapped in collapsed buildings, two days after massive landslides struck Kerala's Wayanad district with the death toll climbing to 276 on Thursday. With nearly 200 people missing, the death toll is expected to rise.

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi along with sister Priyanka visited landslides-hit areas of Wayanad and said he was "deeply pained" to see people who have lost family members and homes in the tragedy, calling it a "national disaster" and demanded an urgent comprehensive action plan.

Meanwhile, rescue efforts have been hindered by a combination of challenges, including treacherous terrain due to destroyed roads and bridges, and a shortage of heavy equipment, making it difficult for emergency personnel to clear mud and huge uprooted trees that fell on houses and other buildings, causing total collapse. Both Gandhi and his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, first visited the landslide-hit Chooralmala area of Wayanad.

Vadra spoke along similar lines as Gandhi, saying the pain people in the area were experiencing was unimaginable.

They both said that most of the affected people do not want to go back and want to be relocated or rehabilitated elsewhere. Both of them were speaking to reporters after visiting the landslide-affected area of Chooralmala here, a hospital and community health centre in Meppadi, and two relief camps. When asked about Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent remarks blaming the state government with regard to the loss of life in the landslides, Gandhi said it was not the time or place to discuss politics. Priyanka indicated that they will be staying back in Wayanad and said that when they are here on Friday, "we are thinking of sitting down and charting out how many affected people there are, what all we can do, what help and support is coming and how we can assist, especially the children who have been left one their own". *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visit a relief camp for people affected by the landslides, in Kerala's Wayanad, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Man killed near Seshadripuram police stn

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

A 25-year-old man working with a blood bank was murdered by a group of assailants at Risaldar Street, hardly 500m from Seshadripuram police station, in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Ajith Kumar was attacked around 4pm, just after he had left his home following lunch. The gang ambushed him, inflicting fatal injuries, and he succumbed to his wounds on the spot.

The motive behind the murder remains unclear, and police are reviewing the CCTV footage from the area to identify the attackers. His body has been sent to Bowring Hospital here for postmortem.

DCP (Central Division) Shekhar said, "We suspect his past may have played a role in his murder." A case has been registered at Seshadripuram police station. *—Salar News*

India to record above-normal rainfall in Aug

India is predicted to record above-normal rainfall in August and September, with a good chance of favourable La Nina conditions developing by the end of August, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday. However, parts of India faced deficit rains in July, The monsoon is critical for India's agricultural landscape, with 52 per cent of the net cultivated area relying on it. IMD said that rainfall over India in August and September would be 106 per cent of the long-period average of 422.8 mm. The country has so far recorded 453.8 mm against the normal of 445.8 mm since 1 June.

AMIDST WAR THREAT

India asks nationals to leave Lebanon

DUBAI, 1 AUGUST

The Indian Embassy in Beirut on Thursday strongly advised Indian nationals against travelling to Lebanon till further notice and leave the country amidst the growing tensions between Israel and Hezbollah.

Since 8 October last year, violence has flared across the border between Israeli troops and Hezbollah.

On Tuesday, Israel targeted Hezbollah's top military commander Fouad Shukur in a strike in southern Beirut. Israel later confirmed that it had killed Shukur, who it said was behind the weekend rocket attack in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights that killed 12 youths.

This advisory comes after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran **PHOTO: PTI**

"In view of the recent developments and potential threats in the region, Indian nationals are strongly advised against travelling to Lebanon till further notice," the Indian Embassy in Beirut said in an advisory posted on X.

"Those who remain for any reason are advised to exercise caution, restrict their movements and remain in contact with the Embassy of India in Beirut through their email id: cons.beirut@mea.gov.in or the emergency phone number +96176860128," the Indian Embassy in Beirut said in an advisory posted on X.

This advisory comes after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran on Wednesday and the killing of Shukur by Israel in Beirut a few hours earlier, increasing the risk of a dangerous escalation in West Asia. *—PTI*

20 dead, 50 missing after cloudburst in HP, U'khand

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

More than 20 people were killed, homes washed away and hundreds left stranded as torrential rains triggered landslides and caused rivers to swell in Himachal and Uttarakhand.

Three people were killed and about 50 went missing following several incidents of cloudburst in Himachal Pradesh where rains washed away many houses, bridges and roads, officials said on Thursday. Heavy overnight rain in Uttarakhand claimed 12 lives, flattened homes and left several areas submerged.

Over 450 pilgrims bound for Kedarnath were stranded beyond Bhimbali along the Gaurikund-Kedarnath trek route after 20-25 metres of the stretch was washed out by heavy rain. In Himachal Pradesh the cloudbursts occurred in Nirmand, Sainj and Malana areas in Kullu district, Padhar in Mandi and Rampur district in Shimla district.

The Manali-Chandigarh National Highway has been damaged at several places due to landslides, an official said. *—PTI*

Flooded Beas river following incessant rains, in Kullu, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

CM Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and Cabinet ministers hold a breakfast meeting at CM's official residence, in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Withdraw notice: Govt to Governor

Showcause notice to CM over MUDA scam is to destabilise Cong govt, say ministers

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

State government on Thursday "strongly advised" Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot to withdraw the showcause notice he issued to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', and alleged that it was part of a concerted effort to destabilise the Congress regime.

Based on a petition filed by advocate-activist TJ Abraham, the Governor issued the notice on 26 July directing the Chief Minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days justifying why permission to prosecute him should not be granted.

The Council of Ministers, which was chaired by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar as Siddaramaiah skipped the meeting, alleged that the notice was a "gross misuse of the Constitutional Office" of the Governor. In a formal response, the Council said the Governor should review the facts of the case. The letter to the Governor noted that the Chief Secretary had already responded to the inquiry, noting that a judicial inquiry led by Justice PN Desai had been conducted. The matter should be handled following sections 17(A) and 19 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and section 218 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, it said.

As per section 17A of the corruption act, a police officer's involvement had not been secured.

After a meeting of the Council of Ministers which lasted five hours, Shivakumar, flanked by seven Cabinet colleagues, said the Governor failed to take note that Abraham has criminal antecedents, including cases of blackmail and extortion registered against him. "I am hopeful that the Governor will withdraw the notice and uphold the dignity of his office in spite of any pressure."

Shivakumar said the Governor, in issuing the showcause notice, has acted in undue haste, circumventing all procedural requirements. He described the Governor's decision as a "murder of democracy and the Constitution". "There is no case for prosecution here," he said. "(This action against) a chief minister who has been elected with a huge majority in a democratic set up is a murder of democracy and detrimental to the Constitution by (sic) the Centre... the Central government is using the governor," he said.

Shivakumar said Abraham had submitted a letter to the governor on 26 July. On the same day, the Chief Secretary had personally given a detailed reply to the Governor on the issue through a report, as sought by him earlier.

Earlier at a breakfast meeting on Thursday, Siddaramaiah held discussions with his Cabinet colleagues regarding a political and legal strategy and the Congress high command's directions on the issue.

Chief Minister's Legal Advisor AS Ponnanna, an MLA, said as per Article 163 of the Constitution, the Governor has to act on the aid and advice of the council of ministers and at his discretion when provided under the Constitution. He further said: "Prior approval under section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act can be sought only by the investigation officer after due verification, not by TJ Abraham.". . *—PTI/Salar*

Kumaraswamy will be part of 'padyatra': BJP

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

HD Kumaraswamy **PHOTO: PTI**

BJP on Thursday placated its miffed ally Janata Dal (Secular) into joining its 'padyatra' against the alleged MUDA scam and asserted that JD(S) leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy will be part of the march starting from Bengaluru on 3 August.

The development comes a day after JD(S) on Wednesday pulled out of the proposed foot march against the alleged irregularities in the distribution of sites by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), including to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife.

Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and BJP General Secretary Radha Mohan Das Agrawal, who is in charge of the party's affairs in the State, played down Kumaraswamy's earlier announcement of keeping out of the yatra.

Kumaraswamy had expressed anger over the mention of BJP leader Preetham Gowda, who was instrumental in exposing the alleged sex scandal involving the JD(S) leader's nephew Prajwal Revanna, as a key organiser of the foot march.

Senior BJP leaders met Kumaraswamy earlier in the day to placate him, sources said. Agrawal said both BJP and JD(S) are organising the foot march from Bengaluru to Mysuru from 3 August to 10 August to protest the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites by MUDA.

About the JD(S) leader's unhappiness with the presence of Gowda, Agrawal said the yatra is a programme of the party's organisation and individuals are not invited. Vijayendra as the BJP's President in Karnataka and Kumaraswamy as his party's face in the State will be the key figures in the programme, he said. Kumaraswamy will be there at the yatra on 3 August, he said.

He was also dismissive of claims by BJP dissidents, including seasoned party leader Basangouda Patil Yatnal, saying there can be some aberrations in a big party like BJP. Yatnal has alleged that Vijayendra is hand in glove with Congress leader and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar to unseat Siddaramaiah.

—PTI

Mansoor included in screening panel for M'rashtra polls

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) has formed screening committees for the upcoming Assembly elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Jammu and Kashmir. AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan will be part of the Maharashtra screening committee. Khan and BV Srinivas are the two representatives from Karnataka who are part of the committees. Srinivas, who is also the first Kannadiga to become Indian Youth Congress (IYC) President, will serve as a member of the committee for Haryana. *—Salar News*

Metro tunnel boring machine sets record

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

Bengaluru Metro's Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) named Tunga has achieved a milestone by tunnelling 308 metres in July alone. It broke the record while tunnelling between KG Halli and Nagawara of Pink Line on Thursday. Tunga surpassed the previous monthly record of 273 metres achieved by Urja in 2022. Tunga began its final drive from KG Halli to Nagavara on 2 February, 2024, with a target of 935 metres. So far, it has tunnelled 469 metres of the total 938-metre target. The TBM is expected to reach Nagavara by 30 October, 2024. BMRCL has deployed nine TBMs for the construction of Namma Metro lines, out of which seven of them have completed the task. *—Salar News*

Kolar dist tops in Atalji Janasnehi Kendra rankings

KOLAR, 1 AUG

A Kolar district has secured first rank for the sixth consecutive month among the districts in State for its achievement in the disposal ranking of Atalji Janasnehi Kendra (Nemmadi Kendra). Atal Janasnehi Kendra aimed at issuing 25-odd certificates including, income, caste, living, widow, small and marginal farmer and landless etc. Kolar district had stood at the 28th position some two years. Thanks to the efforts of Kolar Deputy Commissioner Akram Pasha and his team, the district has now occupied the top spot for the sixth time in a row. During July, the Kendra has issued 51,432 certificates. *—Salar News*

PROPERTY TAX

Three notices to be issued to defaulters

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

- With the deadline to pay property tax through One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme coming to an end on Wednesday, BBMP is set to issue three notices to tax defaulters to pay their tax, failing which the property will be seized.

With the deadline to pay property tax through One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme coming to an end on Wednesday, BBMP is set to issue three notices to tax defaulters to pay their tax, failing which the property will be seized.

"If the dues are settled after the first notice, only the penalty will be charged. If payment is made after the second notice, a 15 per cent interest on the outstanding tax balance will be added. If payment occurs after the third notice, the interest rate will increase to 25 per cent," said Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath on Thursday.

BBMP said only 1.14 lakh property owners had utilized the OTS scheme, raking in Rs 380.63 crore in outstanding dues. However, around 3 lakh taxpayers have not settled their dues totalling Rs 831 crore, despite the opportunity to get interest waivers and discounts. From 1 April to 1 August, the number of properties with outstanding tax dues reduced from 4.11 lakh to 3.04 lakh. Correspondingly, the total tax demand from these properties reduced from Rs 956.09 crore to Rs 831 crore.

There is an increase in properties that have requested revising their taxes due to their modification. *—Salar News*

10,000 CHICKENS BURNT ALIVE IN POULTRY FARM FIRE

KOLAR, 1 AUG

Around 10,000 chickens were burnt alive in a fire that occurred at a poultry-breeding farm at Nernahalli village near Bethamangala in Kolar district on Tuesday night. The fire caused loss to the tune of around Rs 18 lakh.

Though the exact reason for the fire could not be ascertained, police suspected that the labourers at the farm had burnt wood fuel to light up one of the steel barrels in the farm to keep themselves warm. The farm belonged to politician Mohan Krishna of Bethamangala.

According to Gururaj, PSI, Bethamangala, some of the labourers who were sleeping in the farm noticed the fire and before they could douse the flames, the entire farm was gutted and the birds were burnt alive. The fire spread rapidly as the labourers had placed newspapers under the birds to keep them warm, he said. *—Salar News*

TORRENTIAL RAINS

Rivers in spate, woman dies in house collapse in coastal K'taka

MANGALURU/UDUPI, 1 AUG

Coastal Karnataka has been hit by torrential rains **FILE PHOTO: PTI**

Phalguni River in Dakshina Kannada and Shambhavi in Udupi district are in spate following torrential rains in the past two days, officials said on Thursday.

As a result of the heavy to very heavy rainfall, a woman, 56, died after her house partially collapsed in Nellikaru village in Udupi.

According to the secretary of Nellikaru Village panchayat Prashanth Jain the woman was alone in her house when the wall collapsed. Her three children were engaged in covering the leaking roof of the house with a tarpaulin sheet, but a sudden gush of water broke down the wall.

The water level in the Phalguni River recorded a sudden rise early on 1 August and saw at least eight houses in Kadapa and Kariya villages flooded. The river water entered about eight houses of Ammunje village near Polali.

Archana Bhat said there was heaps of garbage floating on the water that had hindered rescue operations. Mangaluru Electric Supply Company has also deployed additional people to clear the area of fallen electric poles and cables.

In Udupi, it has been raining continuously for the past 72 hours. In Karkala taluk on Wednesday there was heavy rain and many rivers including the Shambavi were overflowing.

During last 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Thursday, Renjala of Karkala taluk received a total of 319.5 mm rain, while it was 289.5 mm in Sanur in Karkala, 278.5 mm in Madamakki in Kundapur, 269 mm in Shirtadi. The houses of Mundkur gram panchayat members Ashok Shetty, Suresh Shetty and Bhaskara Shetty were destroyed. *—PTI*

Cyber security policy launched

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE POLICY

- Under the internship programme, a stipend of Rs 10,000-Rs 15,000 per month will be provided, for a maximum of three months, to Karnataka-based undergraduate and postgraduate interns. The target is to facilitate 600 undergraduate interns and 120 post-graduate interns during the policy period
- For R&D projects, driven by Karnataka-based start-ups and in collaboration with Karnataka-based academic institutes, matching grants of up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total project R&D cost, or up to Rs 50 lakh will be given

The policy was launched to combat rising cybercrimes. **PHOTO: PTI**

State government on Thursday launched a comprehensive cyber security policy 2024 to combat rising levels of cybercrimes and promote awareness, skill building, public-private partnerships and technology integration to protect the State's digital infrastructure.

The policy focuses on several key areas such as awareness and education, skill building, promotion of industry and startups, partnerships and collaborations for capacity building, officials said.

The total financial outflow for implementation of the policy for five years is about Rs 103.87 crore, which would be met from the budgetary allocation of the Department of Information Technology and Biotechnology and Science & Technology.

Out of this, Rs 23.74 crore would go towards providing incentives and concessions, they said.

"The government has meticulously crafted this policy to establish a resilient and secure cyberspace," Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and Information Technology and Biotechnology, Priyank Kharge, said.

He said the policy has two parts. Whilst the first part will be in public domain, the second will be internal to the state's IT teams and departments for their IT implementations which will be collaboratively drafted by the Department of Electronics, IT, BT and S&T, the department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, and the Home Department.

The policy was also reviewed by the Indian Institute of Science, which is the anchor institute for the state's K-tech Centre of Excellence for Cyber Security.

—PTI

HC RESERVES ORDER ON PLEA TO CANCEL REVANNA'S BAIL

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

High Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea filed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) seeking cancellation of bail granted to Janata Dal (Secular) leader HD Revanna, who is accused of abducting a woman.

According to police, the woman was allegedly kidnapped to prevent her from testifying against the MLA's son and former MP Prajwal Revanna, who has been charged with raping her.

Justice M Nagaprasanna, who heard the SIT's plea, noted the severity of the allegations against Prajwal Revanna, stating that the facts of the case were particularly "gory" and that bail should not have been granted by the Special MP/MLA court.

Senior Advocate Ravivarma Kumar, representing the SIT, presented the case details, arguing that the nature of the charges warranted the cancellation of bail. He maintained that the trial court's decision to grant bail was incorrect and needed to be revoked. *—Salar News*

'Historic', CM says about top court ruling on SC/ST quota

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

Siddaramaiah **PHOTO: PTI**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday called the Supreme Court's ruling on internal quota for Scheduled Castes and Tribes 'historic', and said a major obstacle in the implementation of internal reservation has been removed thanks to the verdict.

Supreme Court on Thursday held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within Scheduled Castes that form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and economically more backward.

Posting on social media platform X, Siddaramaiah said: "With Supreme Court's verdict, a major obstacle in the implementation of internal reservations has been removed. We will consult with Scheduled Caste leaders and legal experts regarding the contentious aspects of the verdict, including the issue of the creamy layer, and take appropriate action."

He gave the assurance that Congress is committed to providing internal reservation within the Scheduled Castes category. "Our government is committed to implementing the report of the committee chaired by Justice A J Sadashiva, which was created by Congress, as promised in our last Assembly election manifesto," he said.

"Meanwhile, before the last Assembly election, the BJP government in the State hurriedly decided on internal reservations and sent it to Central government. Despite Usha Mehra Committee created by Central government stating that internal reservations within the Scheduled Castes could be implemented through a constitutional amendment, the Central government has so far failed to take any decision and has pushed it aside," he alleged. State government will study the recommendations of the Justice A J Sadashiva Committee, he said. *—PTI*

UNLOCKING KNOWLEDGE

State govt mandates weekly library sessions in schools

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

State School Education Department has issued a circular mandating the implementation of one library session per week for students from Classes 1 to 10 across all schools in Karnataka. The programme titled 'Development of Reading Habits and Knowledge' aims to enhance the reading culture among students.

The circular, issued by Education Commissioner's Office, draws on guidelines from Union Ministry of Education, and State Planning Director of Comprehensive Education Karnataka.

The circular outlines that a well-stocked library with a variety of books, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama and comics, is vital. The initiative also aims to support students in making

PHOTO: PTI

informed decisions about their future studies by providing supplementary documents like guides for post-SSLC options.

The government plans to use annual library grants and the funds collected from Reading Room contributions by students to purchase reading materials. Each school is required to set up a 'child-friendly library' or a reading corner which should be accessible to children at all times. *—Salar News*

THE SCHEDULE

- **Classes 1 to 3:** Every Friday, 3.10pm to 3.40pm
- **Class 4:** Every Monday, 3.50pm to 4.30pm
- **Class 5:** Every Friday, 3.50pm to 4.30pm
- **Classes 6 to 8:** Every Thursday, 3.50pm to 4.30pm
- **Classes 9 to 10:** Every Tuesday, 3.50pm to 4.30pm

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

BRS protest against Revanth's remarks on women

HYDERABAD, 1 AUG

Members of the BRS held a protest in the Telangana Assembly on Thursday demanding an apology from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over his alleged insulting remarks against women members of the Opposition party. Hitting back at the Opposition party, Revanth Reddy said he always respected women and sisters. As soon as the House commenced business, the BRS MLAs wearing black badges rose and started raising slogans. The party leaders walked out and staged a dharna in front of the CM's chambers in the Assembly. Later, they were evicted by the marshals, who carried BRS Working President KT Rama Rao and others out of the Assembly. *—PTI*

Kashmiri Pandits flay Centre over J&K attacks

JAMMU, 1 AUG

A migrant Kashmiri Pandit group on Thursday criticised the BJP-led government for "rising" terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir and demanded a review into the "political and strategic" perspectives in the war against terror. Panun Kashmir also opposed dialogue between the Centre and separatist Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) which has expressed its willingness to participate in the next Assembly elections after leading poll-boycott campaigns over the past three decades. "The strategic wisdom of the central government made it ignore the simmering lava of terrorism inside. The government time and again declared victory against terrorism when terrorists were only spreading their tentacles all across," Panun Kashmir chairman Ajay Chrungoo said. *—PTI*

Telangana passes 'Young India Skill University' Bill

HYDERABAD, 1 AUG

The Telangana Assembly on Thursday passed a Bill for setting up a Young India Skill University-Telangana in the State. Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu moved the Young India Skill University Bill and the House took up a discussion on it. Speaking on the Bill, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said. Reddy said the varsity will be run on a PPP model. The varsity would focus on skilling students in some of the sectors such as BFSI, pharma and life sciences, Artificial Intelligence, retail and e-commerce, he said. He further said a permanent campus for the skill university will be built in over 50 acres at Mucharla near here. BRS legislator Harish Rao said his party is supporting the Bill. *—PTI*

Woman groped in UP: 4 held, eight cops suspended

LUCKNOW, 1 AUG

A woman was groped by a rowdy group on a waterlogged street here, prompting the arrest of four men, action against eight policemen including a DCP and a cryptic remark in the Assembly by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He said a "bullet train" will be run for the offenders. The four alleged offenders were arrested after the woman who was riding pillion on a motorcycle was targeted Wednesday on a waterlogged street in the posh Gomti Nagar area. Five police personnel, including the local police station in-charge, were suspended for "negligence". And deputy commissioner of police (East Lucknow), additional DCP and assistant commissioner of police (ACP) were shunted. While speaking in the Assembly the Chief Minister referred to the incident naming two of the alleged offenders. *—PTI*

Paper leak outside, water leak inside: Oppn in Parl

Oppn attacks Govt over revision of NCERT textbooks

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

RJD MPs Misa Bharti, Manoj Jha and others protest during the Monsoon session in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Opposition leaders on Thursday took swipe at the Modi government over "water leakage" in a lobby of the new Parliament building and hailed the "sturdy" old Parliament building.

Congress' Lok Sabha MP Manickam Tagore posted on X a video of water leaking from the roof in a lobby of the new Parliament building and a bucket placed to collect it. He also submitted a notice for moving an adjournment motion to discuss the issue in the Lok Sabha.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also took a swipe at the government over the issue.

In a post on X, TMC MP Mahua Moitra said, "New parliament lobby is leaking water. Given the building is a monstrous edifice to Narendra Modi's ego it is only fitting that it has got shaky post 2024 lok sabha results. Bharat Mandapam leaks another case in point."

Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain claimed that the condition of the country's capital worsened after a few hours of rain.

Opposition also accused the government of posing a threat to children's intellectual integrity by bringing revision in textbooks, with Congress MP Mohammad Jawed asserting that the Mughals ruled for about 330 years and they cannot be removed from history by just deleting their names.

Accusing the government of "dismantling" the country's education infrastructure, Congress MP Mohammad Jawed slammed the NDA dispensation over the recent incidents of paper leaks.

With Rajya Sabha taking up discussions on the working of certain ministries after the Budget presentation, opposition parties have demanded that the home ministry be among the four to be discussed.

The demand was backed by all opposition parties as well as the BJD, which is not part of the INDIA bloc. *—PTI*

8 Indians died fighting Russia's war, admits Govt

Eight Indians working in the Russian armed forces have died, the government said in Rajya Sabha on Thursday. In reply to a question, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said available information indicated that 12 Indian nationals have already left the Russian armed forces while another 63 individuals are seeking early discharge. *—PTI*

Be alert during proceedings: LS speaker to MPs

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday asked members to be alert during House proceedings or else, he said, they will lose the opportunity to ask supplementary questions during the Question Hour. Birla said this after Shiromani Akali Dal MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal was unable to respond to the speaker's call on time. *—PTI*

Govt introduces bill to amend disaster management law

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

A bill which seeks to strengthen the working of disaster management authorities at the national and state level was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday as opposition members questioned the constitutionality of the measure.

Opposing the bill at the introduction stage, Manish Tewari (Cong) said none of the entries in List 1 or List 2 of the Constitution dealing with central and state subjects deal with the issue of disaster management. He suggested that the government should amend the concurrent list to have a proper entry to cover the issue of disaster management.

Tewari said the law's legislative power should be properly defined. He said any law based on "derived legislative power" may not stand the test of constitutionality.

He also noted that the rule making power of the Centre provided in the bill encroaches the powers of the states.

Minister of State or Home Nityanand Rai, who introduced the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, asserted that there is no interference in the rights of the states and disaster management is the first responsibility of the states. . *—PTI*

'DARK DAY'

18 BJP MLAs suspended from J'khand Assembly

Jharkhand BJP MLAs lie on the floor during their protest inside the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly in Ranchi on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

RANCHI, 1 AUG

Eighteen Jharkhand BJP MLAs were suspended from the assembly till 2 PM of 2 August and were removed by marshals after they refused to leave the House on Thursday.

Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahto took action against the BJP members after they created ruckus in the House in protest against the eviction of Opposition MLAs by marshals on the previous day and Chief Minister Hemant Soren's "refusal" to reply to their queries.

Leader of the Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri alleged that dictatorship prevails in Jharkhand, since the BJP MLAs did not hurl bombs in the House as was done by revolutionaries in Delhi assembly in 1929 but followed the non-violent path of Mahatma Gandhi.

He also alleged that action was taken against the saffron party legislators at the behest of the JMM-led government.

Several BJP MLAs of Jharkhand spent Wednesday night in the Assembly lobby after marshals evicted them from the well of the House where they were protesting against Soren's alleged refusal to reply to their questions on key issues including employment.

The House proceedings were scheduled to begin at 11am on Thursday. BJP legislators told reporters outside the assembly that democracy was "murdered" by the Speaker at the behest of the JMM-led government in the State. *—PTI*

Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Vietnamese PM invites Modi to visit Vietnam

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Emphasiaing that New Delhi-Hanoi strategic partnership has entered a new period, Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on Thursday, extended an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Vietnam.

"Let me take the opportunity to extend my cordial invitation to his Excellency, Prime Minister, to visit Vietnam in the nearest future to reciprocate the kindness and hospitality...," Vietnam PM said as he was holding a joint press statement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Hyderabad House in the national capital.

He praised Modi's leadership, emphasising that under his leadership, India had become the fifth-largest economy in the world and one of the top powers with a striking global role.

"Having made its mark, the leadership of the BJP and the prime minister have brought about great benefits to the Indian people. We are deeply impressed by the whole market of his exact prime minister such as electricity coverage for 28 million poor households, 5G connection, social security and a dramatic increase in people's living standard and food security for all including 800 million who benefit from from free food," he said.

He said that strategic partnership between Vietnam and India has entered a new period, deeper, greater trust, with great effectiveness, to live up to the interest and aspiration of two peoples Peace Corporation development in the region and in the world. *—PTI*

'Marathas extremely backward, quota needed'

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

There is an "exceptional backwardness" among people from the Maratha community and the entire group is looked down upon, hence they deserve reservation in educational institutions and government jobs, a Backward Classes Commission has submitted to the Bombay High Court.

The Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes (MSCBC) filed an affidavit on 26 July as directed by the High Court in response to a bunch of petitions challenging reservation granted to persons from the Maratha community.

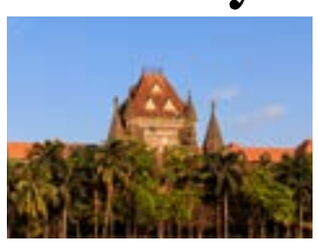


PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

- In the affidavit, the commission said it carried out a quantitative research study and also studied the reports and recommendations made by previous committees

It also said that as per the data relating to 10 years' statistics of suicides committed by open category persons, more than 94 per cent belonged to the Maratha community.

The Maharashtra government had in February this year granted 10 per cent reservation to the Maratha community under the Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) category in government jobs and education.

The petitions had also challenged the recommendations submitted by the commission, based on which the decision was taken.

In the affidavit, the commission said it carried out a quantitative research study and also studied the reports and recommendations made by previous committees.

The affidavit claimed its data showed that the Maratha community had been pushed to the dark edges of mainstream society that it can no longer be considered a part of the mainstream of the society in any real sense of the term. *—PTI*

SC grills Bibhav, asks if 'goon' entered CM's home

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

"Is this kind of goon supposed to work in the CM's residence," the Supreme Court asked on Thursday as it came down heavily on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar who allegedly assaulted AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal earlier this year.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan posted Kumar's bail plea for next Wednesday and told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, that the court was shocked with the details of the incident recorded by the Delhi High Court. Kumar has challenged the 12 July order of the Delhi High Court denying him bail and claimed that the allegations against him are false. He has also said his custody was no longer required as the probe was over. The apex court also issued a notice to the Delhi government on his plea.

The bench also asked Singhvi what Maliwal calling the police helpline number 112 during the assault indicated.

The bench told the senior lawyer, "We are shocked? Is this a way to deal with a young lady? He assaulted her even after she told about her physical conditions."

Singhvi said the court is relying on the details of the FIR lodged by her but Kumar's complaint was not registered by her "friendly" police and Delhi lieutenant governor. *—PTI*

Clashes erupt in Manipur after forces fire tear gas

IMPHAL, 1 AUG

Clashes erupted between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) residing in a relief camp and security forces in Manipur's Imphal East district on Thursday after tear gas was used to disperse a protest rally, police said.

Approximately 100 IDPs from Akampat relief camp in the district attempted to stage a protest but were stopped by security forces, leading to an altercation, they added.The relief camp residents, holding placards and banners, were demanding their rehabilitation and a resolution to the ethnic violence in the state so they could return to their homes at Moreh in Tengnoupal district, and other areas.

Violence which started in May 2023 has so far claimed

PHOTO: PTI

226 lives and left over 59,000 people displaced. Locals also joined the fray, hurling stones at the security forces. The protesters managed to continue their rally for about 1 km but were stopped at Singjamei in Imphal West district after additional security reinforcements, including CRPF personnel, arrived. Reports of assaults and injuries have surfaced but numbers remain unconfirmed. *—PTI*

Govt striving for peace talks: Biren

IMPHAL, 1 AUG

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said the State government is working towards peace talks and has held several meetings in Assam's Silchar."We are making efforts towards peace talks with the assistance of MLAs and other members. Meetings have been held in Silchar, and we will soon make an announcement," Singh said without elaborating who are involved in the meetings. *—PTI*

Digvijaya knocks HC door over poll defeat in MP, questions EVMs

INDORE, 1 AUG

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has issued notices to BJP leader Rodmal Nagar and the Election Commission (EC) seeking their responses on a petition challenging Nagar's election from the Rajgarh Lok Sabha seat.

The petition was filed by Congress' Digvijaya Singh, who lost to Nagar in his home constituency by a margin of 1.46 lakh votes. In his petition, the Rajya Sabha member has questioned the credibility of the system of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and urged the HC to declare the BJP leader's election void.

Justice Hirdesh of the Indore bench of the High Court issued notices to the Election Commission and Nagar on Wednesday. The single bench then listed the matter for further hearing on 17 September.

Singh's petition said that following the directions of the Supreme Court on 26 April, the EC had issued an administrative Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on 1 June for testing and verification of "burnt memory and microcontroller of EVMs". *—PTI*

SC/ST SUB-CLASSIFY

Few MPs welcome, others doubt applicability

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

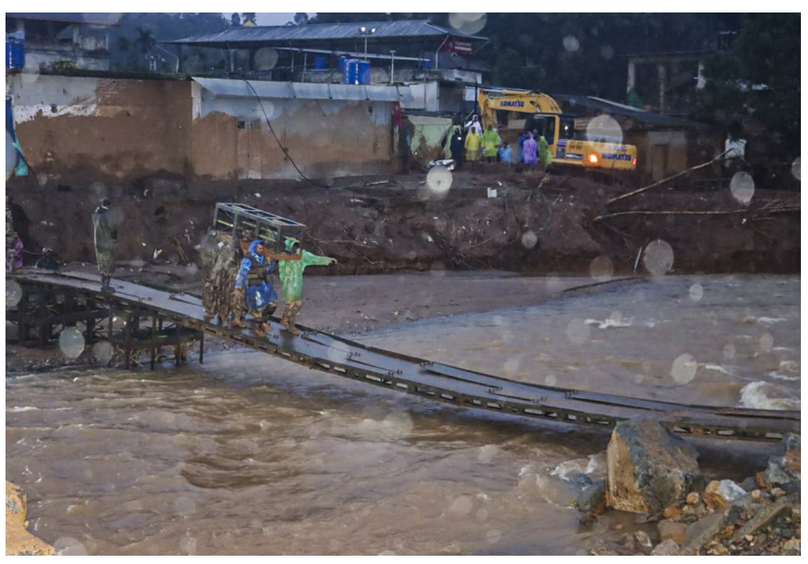
From welcoming the decision as a step towards greater social justice to raising concerns about its implementation without conducting caste census, members of Parliament on Thursday expressed varied reactions to the Supreme Court's verdict on sub-classifying SCs and STs to allocate separate quotas for the more backward groups within these categories.

BJP MP Brij Lal welcomed the verdict, asserting it addresses the economic disparities within the SC/ST communities **PHOTO: PTI**

Reacting to the verdict outside Parliament, Lok Sabha MP Chandrashekhar Azad expressed concerns about the implementation of the verdict.

"Does this not violate Article 341? I also want the deprived classes to benefit but the way the government has privatised and implemented policies, They say only those who feel the pain know it. I want to see how many SC/ST judges are on the bench, who the lawyers were, and what their intentions were. All this should come to light, Azad told PTI Videos.

BJP MP Brij Lal welcomed the verdict, asserting it addresses the economic disparities within the SC/ST communities.Lal also criticised the Congress and Samajwadi Party (SP), accusing them of historically failing Dalit communities. *—PTI*



An IAF helicopter during rescue operations after landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains in Kerala's Chooralmala on Thursday; Army personnel construct a temporary foot-bridge to facilitate rescue operations; India Coast Guard Disaster Relief Team in coordination with Indian Army, Air force, Navy, NDRF and SDRF personnel carry out rescue operation

PHOTOS: SEPCIAL ARRANGEMENT AND PTI

Rescuers fight muddy terrain to find missing people

3,000 rescuers look for the missing in Wayanad as officials grapple to determine exact number

WAYANAD, 1 AUG

Several people remain missing in landslide-hit Wayanad, where rescue operators are contending with adverse conditions, including muddy soil, as they search through destroyed homes and buildings.

Equipment such as JCBs is required to be transported to the site to ensure proper search operations in the worst-affected areas, such as Mundakkai. The construction of a Bailey bridge is progressing well, officials said.

However, a massive search operation is underway at Mundakkai region in landslide-hit Wayanad with a team of over 3,000 rescue workers, the authorities and locals are still grappling to determine the exact number of people missing.

State Revenue Minister K Rajan told the media that the authorities are yet to finalise the number of missing people.

"Initially, we used the voter list to identify the missing persons. But since it does not contain the details of the children, we are now relying on ration cards," Rajan said.

He said the rescue mission at Mundakkai is a massive one, as usually an incident like this will be limited to 1 or 2 km, but in this case, the disaster has struck a massive area.

"The bodies were recovered from the Chaliyar river at Pothukal (in Malappuram district). That shows the huge impact of this incident," Rajan said.

On Wednesday, the DYFI workers scouted the nearby forest areas and recovered over 30 dead bodies.

Even as the rescue operations are progressing, there are no exact details of the number of workers from the nearby tea estate, which was also an affected area.

Sources from Mundakkai said there were migrant workers staying at the quarters of the tea estate, which was washed away.

Information regarding the migrant workers is not available, as the tea estate manager is also missing, the residents said.

According to Revenue minister, currently over 1,600 rescue workers, including the Army, Navy, NDRF, the police, Fire and Rescue among other forces are at the landslide-hit region.

Cadaver dogs are being used by rescuers to locate with dead bodies. On Thursday morning, rescue workers managed to reach Chooralmala where a trail of destruction could be seen with massive boulders scattered everywhere and numerous houses buried or completely washed away. Meanwhile, rescue operators say that heavy machinery is required to remove the huge trees uprooted in the landslides that buried several houses. "We are standing on the terrace of a building, and a smell is emanating from underneath, indicating the presence of dead bodies. The building is fully covered with mud and uprooted trees," a rescue operator told media. An accurate early warning system that correlates rainfall and the potential for landslide is the imperative, say experts as rains create havoc in hills across India and Wayanad.

—PTI

IMD Chief defends Kerala, U'khand, HP rainfall warnings

India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued forecasts for significant rainfall activity along the west coast of India on a regular basis and a red alert for Kerala in the early morning of 30 July, IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said on Thursday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said the Kerala government did not heed the Centre's warning regarding a possible natural calamity in Wayanad due to heavy rains. Responding to Shah's claim, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Wednesday that the IMD had only issued an orange alert in the district ahead of the landslides. However, he said that the district received over 572 mm of rainfall, which was significantly higher than what was predicted by the IMD. *—PTI*

Autopsy count mounts as health workers battle to save survivors

Doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, are working round the clock in Kerala's landslide-affected Wayanad, grappling with a distressing situation that involves providing critical care to severely injured survivors and performing autopsies on the remains of victims claimed by the catastrophic event. "Until 7 am today, we have completed 256 autopsies, which include body parts as well. So, it's not 256 full bodies, but also includes body parts. We have handed over 154 bodies to the district administration," said State Health Minister Veena George. She explained that autopsies have been performed on bodies that were swept away by the river and recovered from the Pothukal area in Malappuram district. *—PTI*

3 drown in Jaipur basement

Three people, including a minor girl, drowned after rainwater gushed into the basement of their house in Vishwakarma area of Jaipur on Thursday. The bodies were recovered after a rescue operation that lasted for several hours, they said. After the water entered the basement of their house, the family members began removing their belongings, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) West Amit Kumar said. Most areas of the Jaipur city experienced waterlogging due to heavy rainfall that began on Wednesday night.

5 dead as rains lash Delhi

A 62-year-old man died in a building collapse in north Delhi's Sabji Mandi area, taking the death toll in rain-related incidents in the national capital to five, on Thursday. Heavy rainfall unleashed chaos in Delhi on Wednesday, inundating large parts of the city, while key stretches were choked with unending traffic. A woman her three-year-old son who had gone to a weekly market in east Delhi's Ghazipur area, drowned after they slipped into a waterlogged drain.

People try to pull a two-wheeler from being swept away by rainwater near Old Rajinder Nagar during the rain, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: PTI

1/4TH OF INDIA FACES DEFICIT RAINFALL THIS MONSOON

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

While floods in Assam and heavy rainfall-induced landslides in Kerala have drawn global attention, 25 per cent of the 36 meteorological subdivisions in India are still reeling from a rainfall deficit halfway through the monsoon season.

According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, the country experienced nine per cent more rainfall than normal in July (306.6 mm compared to the normal of 280.5 mm) with a cumulative precipitation of 453.8 mm against the normal of 445.8 mm since June 1, a surplus of two per cent.

However, the rainfall in July was unevenly distributed, both spatially and temporally.

East Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, and parts of the north-east have recorded significant rainfall deficits.

The rainfall deficit in Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir ranged from 35 per cent to 45 per cent.

—PTI

BSF foils infiltration bid in J&K, intruder shot dead

SAMBA/JAMMU, 1 AUG

A Pakistani intruder was gunned down by BSF troops along the International Border in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir, a senior officer said on Thursday. The officer asserted that anyone stepping his foot on Indian soil with "nefarious design" will meet the same fate. The 45-year-old unarmed intruder was neutralised near the Khora post in Manguchek area after he sneaked into this side from Pakistan post Tugliyalpur late Wednesday night, officials said.The officials said it seems the intruder was deliberately sent to probe the possible gap to be utilised later to push armed terrorists. The officials said the body of the intruder was recovered near the border fence. *—PTI*

Khalid Saifi moves HC against charge in Delhi riots case

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

'United Against Hate' founder Khalid Saifi on Thursday approached the Delhi High Court against invocation of the charge of attempt to murder against him in a case related to the communal rights that erupted in parts of the city in February 2020. The senior lawyer appearing for Saifi argued that once the offences under the Arms Act were dropped against him, and neither any weapon was recovered nor the alleged gunshot was attributed to him, the charge under section 307 IPC can't be framed. Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri, however, said that in view of the statements of witnesses about Saifi's presence at the place of the incident and

Shahi Eidgah: HC junks Muslims' plea

PRAYAGRAJ, 1 AUG

Allahabad High Court on Thursday ruled that the trial in 18 cases relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura can continue, dismissing a petition filed by the mosque committee that challenged the maintainability of these suits.

Justice Mayank Kumar Jain had on June 6 reserved his judgment on the plea moved by the Muslim side on maintainability of the suits. The court has now fixed 12 August as the date for framing of issues.

The suits filed by Hindu litigants seek "removal" of the Shahi Idgah mosque adjacent to the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple. The petitions claim that the Aurangazeb-era mosque was built after the demolition of a temple that marked the spot where Lord Krishna was born.

But the mosque management committee and the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board argued that the suits were barred under Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 that prohibits changing the status of any place of worship from what it was on the day of the country's Indepeandence.

PHOTO: PTI

Hindu side counsel Vishnu Shankar Jain told reporters that with the dismissal of the plea challenging maintainability, the high court will continue to hear all the cases. *—PTI*

FISHERMAN DIES AFTER COLLISION WITH LANKAN SHIP

COLOMBO, 1 AUG

An Indian fisherman was killed and another went missing following a collision on Thursday morning between a Sri Lankan naval vessel and an Indian fishing boat allegedly poaching in the island nation's territorial waters, according to a media report.

The incident took place around five nautical miles north of Katchatheevu Island.

Navy spokesperson Captain Gayan Wickramasuriya said that the incident occurred off Delft Island while the Navy was conducting an operation to chase away the alleged Indian poaching trawlers, Daily Mirror online reported.

In New Delhi, the Sri Lankan acting high commissioner was called to the Ministry of External Affairs and a strong protest was registered over the incident. *—PTI*

COACHING CENTRE DEATHS

Court grants bail to SUV driver, cops drop culpable homicide charge

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

A court here on Thursday allowed the bail plea of an SUV driver who was arrested for his alleged role in drowning of three students in the basement of a coaching centre, saying the accused was "implicated in over-enthusiasm" in the case.

Delhi Police on Thursday told a court here that they have decided to drop harsher charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against the SUV driver in the coaching centre death case.

The decision to drop the charge was conveyed by the investigating officer (IO) to Additional Sessions Judge Rakesh Kumar who is hearing an appeal against the denial of bail to the SUV driver, Manuj Kathuria, by a magisterial court on Wednesday. The judge has also reserved the order on the second bail plea of the driver, arrested for his alleged role in drowning of three civil services aspirants in the flooded basement of a coaching centre here.

PHOTO: PTI

Kathuria was accused of driving his Force Gurkha car through the street that was flooded by rainwater, causing the water to swell and breach the gates of the three-storey building housing the coaching centre and inundate the basement.

Protest for fifth day

Civil services aspirants protesting the Rajinder Nagar coaching centre deaths continued their agitation for the fifth day on Thursday, a day after the area was again submerged following heavy rain.

Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar area, where three students died due to flooding in the basement of a coaching centre last week, received heavy rain on Wednesday evening, with commuters were seen wading through waterlogged lanes and fearing for their safety.

FOR CUET VACANT SEATS

'Varsities can hold exams for admissions'

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Central universities can conduct their own entrance exams or admit students on the basis of marks in the qualifying exam if seats remain vacant in undergraduate and postgraduate courses after admissions through CUET, the UGC announced on Thursday.

Keeping the seats vacant for an entire academic year is not only a waste of resources but also results in denial of quality higher education to many students who aspire to pursue higher studies in central universities, it said.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), however, clarified that scores of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) will remain the primary criteria for admitting students.

PHOTO: PTI

The commission has recommended that students who appeared in CUET may be considered irrespective of the domain subject papers in which they appeared.

"The university may relax the domain subject-specific criteria for admission to a particular course. In case seats remain vacant even after exhausting the list of applicants who appeared in CUET, the university may consider conducting an entrance examination at its own level or the concerned department may conduct a screening test. The university may also admit students on the basis of marks obtained in the qualifying examination. The entire admission process has to be based on merit and transparency. The reservation roster shall apply for admission to courses/programmes in all cases," Kumar said. *—PTI*

- Keeping the seats vacant for an entire academic year is not only a waste of resources but also results in denial of quality higher education to many students who aspire to pursue higher studies in central universities, it said.

Court denies anticipatory bail to Khedkar, urges probe

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

A Delhi court on Thursday denied anticipatory bail to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar who has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing of OBC and PwD (person with disabilities) quota benefits.

Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala said Delhi Police "must also investigate if anyone from inside the UPSC helped Khedkar".

The judge also widened the probe in the case and directed Delhi Police to investigate if other persons have availed of benefits under OBC and PwD quotas without entitlement.

The UPSC on Wednesday cancelled Khedkar's candidature and debarred her from future exams.

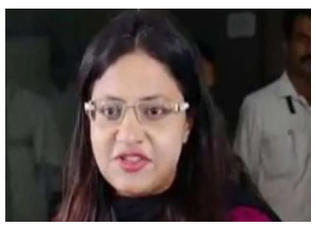


PHOTO: PTI

The judge had on Wednesday reserved the order after hearing arguments on the application filed by Khedkar, who claimed through her lawyer that she has "imminent threat of arrest".

During the proceeding, the prosecution as well as the counsel appearing for the UPSC had opposed the application, claiming that she has "cheated the system". *—PTI*

READY FOR DEMOLITION

Old Sion bridge closed for demolition after the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, in its structural audit, had recommended the dismantling of the 112-year old British-era structure, in Mumbai, on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

Heat, sickness go hand in hand as climate shifts

Experts say that climate change is boosting the spread of malaria, dengue, yellow fever, cholera and chikungunya, as well as chronic diseases
PHOTO: PTI

Indians are no strangers to scorching summers, but this year's hottest months — from April to June — felt unbearably hot.

The people faced its worst heat wave in over a decade, with hundreds dying and thousands others having their health severely impacted by extreme weather conditions. Temperatures shot past 50 degrees Celsius in New Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Then came the monsoon season, and the heat broke. This month, however, torrential rain triggered floods and landslides in India's north and northeast, killing scores of people and affecting hundreds of thousands. And both heat and flooding are exacerbating an even deadlier problem — the spread of disease.

'Beyond human tolerance'

Experts say, climate change is boosting the spread of malaria, dengue, yellow fever, cholera and chikungunya, as well as chronic diseases, particularly among the millions of people who already live with poor sanitation, pollution, malnutrition and a shortage of drinking water.

In India's urban centres, "temperatures are rising beyond human tolerance, humidity is increasing, and so is the nighttime heat," Sunita Narain, head of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a New Delhi-based public interest research and advocacy organization, said.

Recent studies have shown that temperatures rising just a few degrees above our body heat levels have an array of harmful effects on mental and physical capabilities. For example, women working in heat-sensitive jobs such as agriculture or construction are at risk for pregnancy-related complications.

Narain warns that cholera, a disease thought to be virtually eradicated, was now "back again with a vengeance." At the same time, she says there is more to the problem than rising temperatures.

"It is not climate change that is bringing cholera. The fact is, it is the mismanagement of the environment," Narain said.

Heat deaths hiding behind other causes

Experts warn that heat waves may be deadlier than we realise, as many heat deaths are attributed on the death certificate to other factors.

"Most people dying during heat waves are not recorded as connected to the heat. There needs to be a proper formulation of heat action plans for cities and towns," Dileep Mavalankar, former head of the Indian Institute of Public Health, told DW.

A rise in diseases

Climate-sensitive diseases are rising in India, with some of them showing a clear link to the monsoon rainfall and heat. The government is also aware of the link between mortality and heat, and has listed detailed objectives to build up its capacities and prepare India's medical system to mitigate risks.

However, experts trying to plan and ameliorate these issues often face a fundamental problem — a lack of data.

"This is the first hurdle that we need to work on if we are to save lives," climate scientist Roxy Mathew Koll from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology told DW.

Agriculture to focus on 'resilient' crops

Children and the poorest segments of India are believed to be bearing the brunt of health risks associated with changing climate.

A recent study showcased by Indian officials explored the association between climate parameters and infectious diseases in a three-year study involving 461 children under 16 in the northern city of Varanasi. The researchers established that climate factors such as temperature, humidity, rainfall, solar radiation, and wind speed were significantly associated with infectious diseases like gastrointestinal diseases, respiratory diseases, vector-borne diseases and skin diseases in children.

Chandra Bhushan, Head of the Delhi-based International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology, said that building resilience in health infrastructure is crucial to deal with climate extremes.

This year, for instance, the Delhi government asked hospitals to initiate a heat-relief action plan and ensure preparedness to deal with Heat Related Incidents (HRIs). In May, there was an increase of between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of heat-related patients coming into outpatient departments and about 10 per cent into emergency departments.

According to the veteran activist, the impact on nutrition and health of the climate crisis is also now being studied. This is also expected to impact India's agriculture.

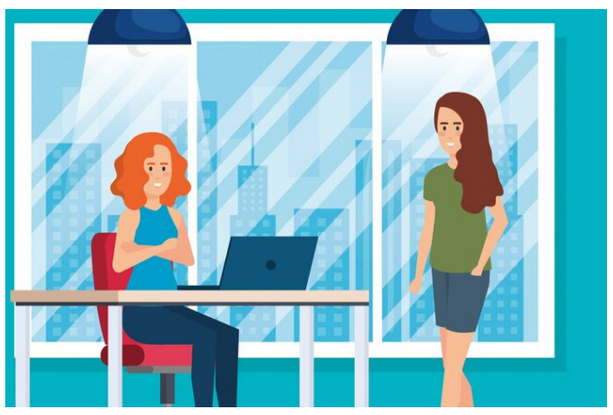
With climate change taking a heavy toll on people's health, the researcher says, India will have to "adapt and invest" to boost the reslience of its health infrastructure.

Courtesy, DW India

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہر

42% of women surveyed face bias at work: Study



Study is based on a survey gathering input from nearly 24,000 professional women from over 560 companies
PHOTO: FREEPIK

- About 53 per cent of women who have visible female leaders in the organisation reported feeling confident in their career growth,52 per cent said it had a positive impact on their culture

Around 42 per cent of women surveyed face bias at work, says a study which found 90 per cent of women working in corporate jobs highly motivated to 'go the extra mile' to grow in their careers.

The '2024 Voice of Women Study India' by global professional services firm Aon has revealed that 42 per cent of women working in corporate jobs stated they face bias or potential bias at work and 37 per cent revealed they have experienced insensitive behaviour.

However, over 90 per cent of women responded that they are prepared to put in extra time, volunteer for challenging projects and upskill themselves to grow in their careers.

Around 6 per cent of women surveyed said they had faced sexual harassment at least once, yet less than half officially reported the incident to their employer.

Aon's study is based on a survey gathering input from nearly 24,000 professional women from over 560 companies in India.

According to the study, working mothers had their own challenges, with 75 per cent responding that they faced a career setback of one-to-two years after maternity leave and close to 40 per cent said going on maternity leave had a negative impact on their pay and their role was changed to something they did not prefer.

Further, 34 per cent of the respondents in senior management and leadership roles indicated facing discrimination as compared to 17 per cent in entry-level roles indicating a rise in bias as women progress in their careers.

According to the study, around 21 per cent of women who faced bias indicate leaving an organisation in less than a year versus only six per cent who have not faced bias.

"Bias at work is impeding businesses' efforts to engage and retain skilled and committed women in the workforce... Building inclusive work culture has to be a CEO-led priority. Business decision makers must urgently take steps to address systemic bias through inclusive policies and practices for equitable pay, career progression and maternity guardrails," Nitin Sethi, chief executive officer of Talent Solutions in India for Aon, said.

The study further found that having women in leadership roles has a positive impact on an organisation.

About 53 per cent of women who have visible female leaders in the organisation reported feeling confident in their career growth, 52 per cent said it had a positive impact on their culture and 41 per cent saw women leaders as role models, it stated.

The presence of women leaders also reduced the perception of unfairness for three key people processes including performance review, promotion and compensation, added the study.

"Addressing gender issues is critical for businesses in India as they tackle talent shortage and navigate an uncertain business environment. The data clearly highlights that the higher the positive experiences women have at the workplace the greater the representation of women in the workforce," Shilpa Khanna, associate partner and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practice leader of Talent Solutions in India for Aon and the study's leader, said.

Businesses must deepen their DEI efforts by actively listening to women in the workplace and utilising data-driven insights to ensure they make informed decisions to remove barriers to progress and reframing policies that support women employees at different life stages, she added.

—PTI

According to the study, around 21 per cent of women who faced bias indicate leaving an organisation in less than a year versus only six per cent who have not faced bias
PHOTO: FREEPIK

Amid global turmoil, Blinken aims to ease anxiety over US election

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, second left and Mongolia's Foreign Minister Batmunkh Battsetseg, third right, hold a meeting in Ulaanbaatar on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

With large parts of the world in turmoil and deep uncertainty over the future direction of America's global role, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought this week to project an aura of calm normalcy as he travelled through Asia on his first overseas mission since President Joe Biden jolted the 2024 presidential race with his withdrawal.

On a trip to Laos, Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia that was punctuated by several potential escalatory developments in the Middle East, an uptick in Russian attacks in Ukraine and overshadowed by persistent fears about China's increasingly aggressive actions, he could not escape questions and comments about domestic US politics.

Having embarked on the six-nation tour just days after Biden's decision, Blinken no doubt would have preferred to avoid the issue entirely but came prepared with several stock answers to questions about US leadership from concerned partners and allies. Chief among them: "I don't do politics" and variations on "American engagement abroad endures across administrations."

In the Philippines, Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin remained politely silent when President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed them with a nod toward the campaign that now pits former President Donald Trump against presumptive Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris.

"We are very happy to see (you) once again," Marcos said on Tuesday in Manila. "I am a bit surprised considering how interesting your political situation has become back in the States, but I'm glad that you've found the time to come and visit with us."

In Singapore, Blinken was asked by a senior diplomat about the "noise coming out of the presidential campaign" and replied with a joke.

"Really? I hadn't heard any of it," he said to laughter from the audience of students and academics from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy before taking a stab at a serious answer.

"We have these periodic things called elections and I think it's normal that before every election — given the importance of this moment in history that our country has around the world — that of course people ask questions," Blinken said.

"They wonder what's going to happen in any given election, what direction does the country take, and maybe there are lesser or higher degrees of that on any given election, but it always happens before every election, and I understand that," he said.

But, he argued that no matter who occupies the White House "there are a number of constants that don't fundamentally change irrespective of who wins a particular election."

The main one, he said, is that most Americans want to be engaged with the rest of the world, taking a veiled jab at Trump's "America First" mantra that caused major angst among US allies, particularly in Europe, Japan and South Korea, in his first term.

"If you listen to our fellow citizens, they actually want the United States to be engaged in the world," Blinken said. "They strongly prefer that the United States not engage the world alone. They know the benefits in partnerships, in alliances, and again, that's a constant. And I think that remains no matter what."

And, he said that conversely, much of the world wants the US to play a major role in international affairs.

"Most countries actually want us engaged," he said. "They want our leadership, they want our partnership, and that's a very positive signal that resonates back in the United States. So look, I really do understand the focus on this, but I'm also very confident that at the end of the day, most Americans see the benefits of our engagement around the world." Yet unease was palpable at several of Blinken's stops, even if the officials voicing it avoided direct mentions of the US election.

"We are at an historic turning point," Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa told Blinken and Austin on Sunday in Tokyo. "Developments that shake the very foundation of free and open international order based on rule of law are continuing. Thus, decisions taken by us today will determine our future."

"As for the US situation, we are watching with keen interest," she said. "But in any case, in order to completely and thoroughly defend the international order, Japan and the U.S. ... should continue to enhance our deterrence power." Blinken — who with Austin was in Tokyo to announce an upgrade in US-Japan military ties, something that Trump had wanted to curtail while in office — tried to downplay such concerns. He noted that the US and Japan have a solid alliance that has remained solid and gotten stronger because of shared interest. Because of that interest, "I know (the alliance) will be sustained irrespective of the outcome of the elections in either of our countries," Blinken said.

Austin agreed, saying in both Tokyo and Manila that there is strong bipartisanship support in the US for both alliances. Still, the questions persisted. Back in Singapore, Blinken demurred when asked who would win in November and how it would affect U.S. foreign policy. "One of the benefits of my job is that I don't do politics," he said, reverting to his stock answer. "Predicting an election in our country is something I wouldn't hazard to do," he said. "Our elections have been very, very close, and I expect this next election is likely to be the same, just looking at it as an American citizen." Instead, he said he was focused on the last six months of the Biden administration and particularly what it could do to support Ukraine and try to forge a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas conflict.

—AP

Pakistan's cultural capital sees record rainfall

LAHORE, 1 AUG

Pakistan's cultural city of Lahore saw record-high rainfall early Thursday, leaving at least one person dead, while flooding streets, disrupting traffic and affecting normal life, officials said. The downpour started before dawn and is expected to continue for a week at intervals, according to the National Disaster Management Authority. In an advisory, it said the rains are likely to cause flash flooding and landslides. The monsoon rains also lashed Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, and other areas. The latest spell of rains in Lahore was so heavy that it quickly flooded many streets and rainwater entered some wards in the Jinnah and Services hospitals in the capital of Punjab province, causing problems for patients undergoing treatment there.—*AP*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Halla Tómasdóttir to be sworn in as Iceland's 7th Prez

REYKJAVÍK, 1 JULY

A feminist entrepreneur who started an investment fund with the musician Björk at the height of Iceland's 2008 financial crisis and gave a TED talk on applying "feminine values" to finance is to become her country's president on Thursday. **Halla Tómasdóttir** won just more than 34% of the vote in elections in June, beating a crowded field that included Katrín Jakobsdóttir, who resigned as prime minister to run. She will replace Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, who despite considerable popularity is stepping down after eight years in office. Halla was previously the chief executive of The B Team, a non-profit co-founded by Sir Richard Branson. She was also the head of Iceland's chamber of commerce and co-founded the now defunct financial services company Auður.—*The Guardiam*

US not expecting rise in attacks in Iraq, Syria: Austin

WASHINGTON, 1 AUG

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Wednesday (local time) that he did not expect a surge in attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria, as they have in the past. Speaking to reporters as he departed for the Philippines, Lloyd Austin said that the safety of American troops is really important to him, adding that the US has taken some measures to protect itself. Asked about attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria and whether they are connected to rising tensions between Israel and Hezbollah, Austin responded, "Do I see the attack, the recent attacks connected to, well, I think it's all connected, but I think, quite frankly, I don't see a return to where we were several months ago, not yet." —*ANI*

Poland marks 80th anniversary of Warsaw Uprising

WARSAW, 1 AUG

The Polish and German presidents bowed their heads to the cadence of a military drum as they paid tribute Thursday to Poles slaughtered by Nazi Germany during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 on the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the ill-fated revolt. As Poland marked the hallowed day, news broke that the oldest surviving insurgent of the uprising, 106-year-old Barbara Sowa, died in the morning. With very few survivors left to take part in the ceremonies, it was a poignant reminder of the passing away of the generation shaped by the sacrifice of World War II. Later, the city will stop and sirens will wail to pay tribute to the insurgents. Taylor Swift, who is giving the first of three concerts Thursday evening in Warsaw, warned her fans on social media not to panic when they hear the sirens. —*AP*

Hamas military leader Deif killed in airstrike: IDF

Israeli jets patrolled the building for half a day before the strike

TEL AVIV, 1 AUG

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) on Thursday announced that Hamas military wing commander Mohammed Deif had been killed in an airstrike in the southern Gaza Strip on 13 July. The Israeli military said that it obtained intelligence confirming his death in the past few hours. Deif was targeted in a strike at Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade commander Rafa'a Salameh's compound in Khan Younis area on 13 July, The Times of Israel reported.

A day later, the IDF confirmed the death of Salameh. However, it did not have final information on Deif. The IDF believed that its intelligence indicated that Deif visiting the compound belonging to Salameh was highly accurate and the two Hamas military officials were together in the building that was hit with several heavy munitions, according to The Times of Israel report. Israeli fighter jets had patrolled the building for half a day before conducting the strike after the IDF had early indications that Deif was with Samaleh. The two jets were in the air above the site. After the military received confirmation that Deif had arrived at the compound, the jets were given the order to target, which was conducted within just a few minutes, according to The Times of Israel report.

Israel's confirmation regarding Deif comes a day after Hamas' political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh was killed in an attack in Iran's capital, Tehran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said. —*ANI*

Hamas leader's funeral draws crowds

TEHRAN, 1 AUG

Thousands have turned out for the funeral procession in Iran of the Hamas political chief, Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed in a strike in Tehran on Wednesday.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, led prayers for the Hamas leader, whose body will be buried in Qatar.

US media have quoted Iranian officials as saying the supreme leader has ordered a direct attack against Israel, which it says was responsible for the attack on Iranian soil.

Israel has not commented on the assassination directly. However, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country had delivered "crushing blows" to its enemies in recent days, including the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon hours before the Tehran strike.

He warned Israelis that "challenging days lie ahead", as fears of a wider conflict in the Middle East grow. "Since the strike in Beirut, we have heard threats from all sides," he told a televised address.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned against a "dangerous escalation" of hostilities in the region. Haniyeh, who played an important role in negotiations over a ceasefire in Gaza, was killed hours after attending the inauguration of Iran's new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, in Tehran.

A senior Hamas official told BBC the killing took place in the same building where Haniyeh had stayed during previous visits to Iran.

Three Hamas leaders and a number of guards were with him in the same building, they said. —*BBC News*

People gather as the coffins of Hamas late political leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard are carried in Tehran, Iran on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

WHO IS MUHAMMAD DEIF

- Initiated, planned, and carried out the 7 October Massacre
- Operated closely with Yahya Sinwar who is the head of Hamas
- He managed Hamas' operations in Gaza Strip
- He joined Hamas during first Intifada
- He was involved with the kidnapping and murder of Sergent Nachshon Wachsman in 1994
- He was involved in suicide bombing inside Israel

Clashes were reported in the capital Dhaka PHOTO: PTI

Fresh violence in Bangladesh student protests

DHAKA, 1 AUG

Fresh violence has broken out in Bangladesh between police and student protesters demanding justice for victims of recent unrest.

Clashes were reported in the capital Dhaka and other cities on Wednesday. In the north-eastern city of Sylhet, an official claimed demonstrators had attacked police who in turn used tear gas.

Photos sent from the southern city of Barisal to BBC Bangla show police in riot gear and wielding batons, barricading demonstrations and taking away protesters, many of whom are women.

More than 200 people have been killed in this month's violence, mostly as a result of police opening fire. Nearly 10,000 people have reportedly been detained. Wednesday's "March for Justice" was called by the Students Against Discrimination movement.

They said they were demonstrating against "mass killings, arrests, attacks, and disappearances of students and people". Students have been protesting against attempts to reinstate quotas in civil service jobs for relatives of veterans from the country's war for independence from Pakistan in 1971 for more than three weeks. A third of public sector jobs had been set aside for them, but on 21 July the Supreme Court court ruled just 5 per cent of the roles could be reserved.—*BBC News*

Gov bans Jamaat, Shibir

The Bangladesh government today decided to ban the Jamaat-e-Islami following the deadly nationwide students' protests over quotas in government jobs, accusing it of exploiting the movement that left at least 150 people dead. A notification issued by the Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs on August 1 confirmed the ban on the Islamist party, a key ally of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. —*PTI*

POLITICAL TURMOIL

Maduro blames unrest on far-right conspiracy

VENEZUELA, 1 AUG

Nicolás Maduro has gone on the offensive after suspicions that he stole last Sunday's presidential election plunged Venezuela into turmoil and diplomatic isolation, blaming the unrest on a far-right conspiracy being spearheaded by "perverse and macabre" political foes.

Addressing foreign journalists at the presidential palace in Caracas – as international condemnation of the allegedly rigged election grew – Venezuela's authoritarian leader struck a defiant note.

González and Machado say their campaign secured a landslide amid widespread anger over Venezuela's economic collapse during the incumbent's 11-year rule and a migration crisis that has seen 8 million citizens flee abroad.

But Maduro has claimed victory – thus far without providing proof – sparking street protests and a wave of international criticism, including from leading members of the Latin American left.

On Tuesday the Carter Center – a pro-democracy group that Maduro's administration had invited to witness the election and has previously praised – added its voice the chorus of disapproval, claiming the vote could not "be considered democratic".

Later, during an encounter with the foreign press in the heavily guarded Miraflores palace, Maduro said he hoped to see González and Machado imprisoned.

"These people must be put behind bars," he said as hundreds of supporters gathered outside.

—*The Guardian*

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects a flood-hit area in Sinuiju city, North Phyongan province, North Korea PHOTO: PTI

South Korea offers help to flood-hit North Korea

SEOUL, 1 AUG

South Korea on Thursday offered to send aid supplies to North Korea to help the country recover from heavy rains and floods that submerged thousands of homes and huge swaths of farmland.

It's unclear whether North Korea would accept South Korea's proposal for help. Animosity between the war-divided rivals is at its highest in years over the North's growing nuclear ambitions and the South's expansion of combined military exercises with the United States and Japan to counter the North's threats.

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the South's offer.

North Korean state media said Wednesday that recent heavy rains left 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other public buildings, structures, roads and railways flooded in the northwestern city of Sinuiju and the neighboring town of Uiju.

The North has not reported details about casualties.

In an emergency Politburo meeting on Wednesday in Sinuiju, leader Kim Jong Un asked authorities to "strictly punish" those who he said neglected their responsibilities for disaster prevention and caused "even the casualty that can not be allowed," according to the North's Korean Central News Agency.

The North had also rejected South Korea's offers for help while battling a Covid-19 outbreak in 2022. —*AP*

Vivek Ramaswamy PHOTO: X/@VIVEKGRAMASWAMY

Ramaswamy slams Kamala over 'identity politics'

WASHINGTON DC, 1 AUG

Former Republican Presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has accused Vice President Kamala Harris of leaning into 'identity politics' and claimed that she only considered herself Indian-American when "convenient."

Ramaswamy, who supports the Republican Party's nominee Donald Trump now, said that Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, leaned on her Indian American heritage while running for office in California, where there is a significant Asian American population, but has since shifted her focus away from that identity on the national stage.

The 38-year-old Indian-American biotech entrepreneur drew a comparison between Harris' heritage and his own to share his views on the subject.

"My parents were immigrants to this country, legal immigrants from southern India- the very same part of India that other also immigrated from," he told Fox News.

"I think it's a hard fact... it's a fact whether you like it or not, that many Indian-Americans in the US are indeed somewhat offended by the way Kamala has suddenly cast aside the Indian-American side of identity," Ramaswamy said. —*PTI*

3 accused of plotting 9/11 reach plea deal

WASHINGTON, 1 AUG

Three of the men accused of plotting the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US have entered into a pre-trial agreement, the Department of Defense says.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Walid Muhammad Salih Mubarak Bin Attash, and Mustafa Ahmed Adam al-Hawsawi have been held at the US Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for years without going to trial.

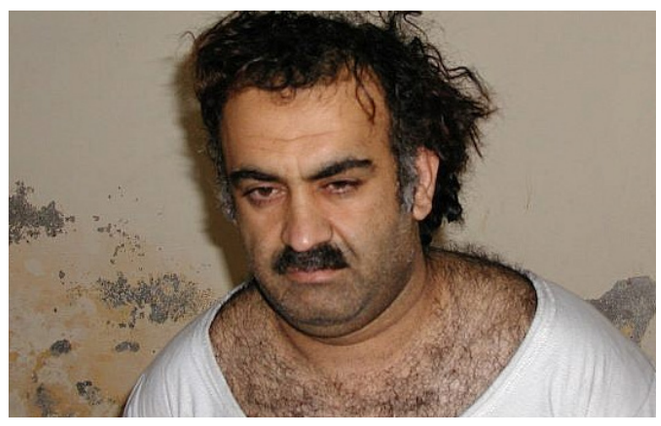
Details of the deal have not been announced, but US news outlets say the men will plead guilty in exchange for the prosecution agreeing not to seek the death penalty. Nearly 3,000 people in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania were killed in the attacks, which sparked the "War on Terror" and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Brett Eagleson, the president of 9/11 Justice, an organisation that represents 9/11 survivors and relatives of victims, said in a statement provided to the BBC that the families are "deeply troubled by these plea deals".

He said the process lacked transparency and urged the authorities to pursue more information on the role of Saudi Arabia in the attacks.

Terry Strada, who lost her husband Tom, told the BBC's Today Programme: "It was a gut-punch to hear that there was a plea deal today that was giving the detainees in Guantanamo Bay what they want."

The 9/11 attacks were the deadliest assault on US soil since the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where 2,400 people were killed. The plea deal was first announced in a letter sent by prosecutors to the families of victims, according to The New York Times. —*BBC News*



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, one of the accused, when he was captured in 2003 PHOTO: AP

UK PM chairs meet over stabbing row

LONDON, 1 AUG

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday called a meeting with police chiefs after violent protests outside Downing Street in London over the fatal stabbing of three young girls in Southport, north-west England, as the teenage male suspect in the attack was charged with murder.

The Metropolitan Police said that over 100 people have been arrested during the clashes on Wednesday evening for offences including violent disorder, assault on an emergency worker, and breach of protest conditions as some of its officers suffered minor injuries.

It followed violent protests in Southport and also in Hartlepool, north-east England, and Aldershot, south-east England, believed to involve far-right groups whipped up by social media misinformation claiming the male suspect behind the stabbing was a Muslim asylum seeker who arrived illegally in the country on a boat.

Protesters later tried to kick down a fence as they were confronted by police equipped with riot gear.

Chants of "Rule Britannia", "save our kids" and "stop the boats" could be heard as the crowd was penned in by the police trying to contain the disorder on Wednesday night. —*PTI*

Keir Starmer PHOTO: X/@KEIR_STARMER

HI-TECH 'SMART SYSTEM'

Xi to boost China's border defence

BEIJING, 1 AUG

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for greater use of technology and the deployment of a "smart system" for border defence to meet "new opportunities and challenges", amidst Beijing's unresolved land and maritime territorial disputes with its neighbours.

The instructions were made during a group study session on Tuesday attended by the Communist Party's 24-member Politburo, its top policy-making body.

Xi highlighted the need to "strengthen technological empowerment" in border defence, "enhance the development of new methods and conditions for border, maritime, and air defence, and build a comprehensive and smart management and control system," Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday.

This aligns with Xi's repeated calls to improve the use of advanced technology in the armed forces to meet modernisation goals by 2027 and achieve the goal of building a world-class military by 2050.

However, an article published last year in the PLA Daily, the official newspaper of the People's Liberation Army, said technological advancements for border defence included modernised reconnaissance, surveillance, and early warning networks for efficient monitoring, as well as unmanned weapons incorporating AI.

China is facing tensions on multiple fronts, including the military standoff with India in eastern Ladakh since May 2020. The two sides so far agreed to disengage from four points, namely the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra) in eastern Ladakh. —*PTI*

Xi Jinping PHOTO: PTI

- China is facing tensions on multiple fronts, including the military standoff with India in eastern Ladakh since May 2020

Rupee settles 5 paise lower at 83.73 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 1 JULY

The rupee declined 5 paise to settle at 83.73 against the US currency on Thursday amid a rise in demand for the dollar and an increase in crude oil prices. The rupee opened at higher at 83.67 due to weakness in the US dollar in overseas markets after the US Federal Reserve hinted at a rate cut in near future. The unit however failed to hold onto gains and fell to the day's low of 83.75 later. The domestic unit settled at 83.73 (provisional), down 5 paise from the previous close. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic currency had closed at 83.68 against the US dollar on Wednesday. Forex traders said gains from a weak dollar were offset by month-end dollar demand and rising crude prices. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rebounded from early lows and gained 0.29 per cent to 104.17 in late Asian trade. Brent crude -- the global oil benchmark -- rose by 0.78 per cent to USD 81.47 per barrel in futures trade.—*PTI*

Gold jumps ₹ 550; silver rallies 600

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Gold prices rallied Rs 550 to Rs 72,500 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday on higher domestic demand and positive global trends. The yellow metal rose for the third day in a row, recovering from sharp losses due to the government's budget announcement of a customs duty cut on gold and silver. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 71,950 per 10 grams. Silver prices also jumped Rs 600 to Rs 86,200 per kg from Rs 85,600 per kg in the previous session, according to the All India Sarafa Association. "The risk of a further escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East pushes the safe-haven commodity to a... high during the Asian session on Thursday," Rahul Kalantri, Vice President of Mehta Equities Ltd, said. —*PTI*

Be cautious of fake trading platforms: HDFC to customers

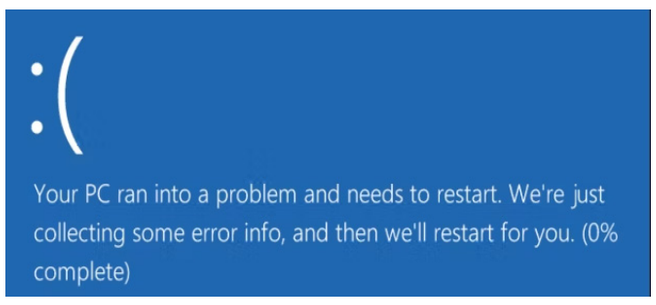
NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Faced with a growing number of cases of investment fraud, HDFC Bank on Thursday advised its customers to be cautious against fraudulent trading platforms that offer investment opportunities. Most of the lucrative offers come through social media platforms and the aim of this advisory is to increase awareness about potential investment frauds to safeguard customers, HDFC Bank said in a statement. In cases of investment fraud, fraudsters are seen to typically promise unusually high returns on investments in stocks, IPOs, cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, etc, it said. This involves the creation of fake automated investment platforms or apps where victims get to view fake dashboards indicating high returns in investments, it said. While the government, banks and regulatory bodies are taking steps to curb these frauds, individual vigilance and awareness play a very important role in avoiding falling prey to illegitimate schemes, he said. —*PTI*

CrowdStrike sued over Microsoft outage

Shareholders say firm made false claims

WASHINGTON DC, 1 AUG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Your PC ran into a problem and needs to restart. We're just collecting some error info, and then we'll restart for you. (0% complete)

Microsoft's share price dropped 32 per cent in the 12 days after the incident PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

CrowdStrike is being sued by its shareholders after a faulty software update by the cybersecurity firm crashed more than eight million computers and caused chaos around the world.

The lawsuit accuses the company of making "false and misleading" statements about its software testing.

It also says the company's share price dropped 32 per cent in the 12 days after the incident, causing a loss in market value of USD 25 billion.

CrowdStrike denies the allegations and says it will defend itself against the proposed class action lawsuit.

Meanwhile, the firm has said computers affected by the massive global IT outage are effectively now back to normal.

The US-based company stated that as of 5pm local time on Monday, 29 July (00:00, Tuesday GMT), the outage had been fixed - ten days after the incident began.

The suit filed in the Austin, Texas federal court, alleges that CrowdStrike executives defrauded investors by making them believe the company's software updates were adequately tested.

The lawsuit is seeking an unspecified amount of compensation for investors who owned CrowdStrike shares between 29 November and 29 July.

It cites chief executive George Kurtz, who said in a conference call on 5 March that the firm's software was "validated, tested and certified."

Meanwhile, the chief executive of Delta Air Lines, Ed Bastian, has said in an interview with business news channel CNBC that the disruption caused by the outage cost the airline $500m, including lost revenue and compensation to passengers.

Delta has reportedly hired a prominent lawyer and is preparing to seek compensation from CrowdStrike.

The faulty update on 19 July crashed 8.5 million Microsoft Windows computers around the world. The outage disrupted businesses and services, including airlines, banks and hospitals.

In a detailed review of the incident, CrowdStrike said there was a "bug" in a system designed to ensure software updates worked properly.

CrowdStrike said the glitch meant "problematic content data" in a file went undetected.

—*BBC News*

POWER GRID, NTPC GAINS

Nifty hits all-time high of 25,010; Sensex rises 126 pts

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Stock markets remained on a record-smashing course for the fifth straight day on Thursday, with Sensex and Nifty settled at record-high levels after buying in index heavyweights HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 126.21 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at a new lifetime high of 81,867.55. In the intra-day session, it soared 388.15 points, or 0.47 per cent, to hit an all-time intra-day high of 82,129.49.

The NSE Nifty rose 59.75 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 25,010.90. Intraday, it scaled the record 25,000 level for the first time, rising 127.15 points, or 0.50 per cent, to 25,078.30.

From the Sensex stocks, Power Grid, NTPC, HDFC Bank, Nestle India, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Maruti Suzuki India and Reliance Industries were the major gainers.

In contrast, Mahindra and Mahindra, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Motors were the laggards.

Brent crude -- the global oil benchmark -- rose 0.98 per cent to USD 81.63 per barrel in futures trade.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong closed in the negative territory, while Seoul ended in the green.

The European markets were quoting lower in the mid-session deals on Thursday. The US stocks settled in the green territory in overnight trade on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled higher by 285.94 points or 0.35 per cent at 81,741.34 -- its all-time closing high -- while NSE Nifty rose 93.85 points or 0.38 per cent to close at an all-time high of 24,951.15.

—*PTI*

ADANI ENERGY SOLUTIONS SHARES SURGE OVER 8%

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Shares of Adani Energy Solutions surged more than 8 per cent on Thursday a day after billionaire Gautam Adani-led group's power transmission unit said it has raised USD 1 billion through a share sale.

This was the first public equity raised by the conglomerate since a damning Hindenburg report.

The scrip of the company rallied 8.34 per cent to trade at Rs 1,232.95 apiece on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

On the BSE, it zoomed 7.92 per cent to trade at Rs 1,227.75 per piece.

In late morning trade, the shares of Adani Energy Solutions hit an intra-day high of Rs 1,236.70 and 1,236 apiece on the BSE and the NSE.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 88.64 points or 0.11 per cent to trade at 81,829.98, while NSE Nifty went up 53.90 points to trade at 25,005.05. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Manufacturing sector's growth eases slightly in July

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

India's manufacturing sector growth eased slightly in July, on softer increases in new orders and output, while cost pressures and demand strength led to the steepest increase in selling prices since October 2013, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) moderated slightly from 58.3 in June to 58.1 in July.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's headline manufacturing PMI showed a marginal slowdown in the pace of expansion in July, but with most components remaining at robust levels, the small drop is no cause for concern," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

Despite slowing since June, Indian manufacturers reported a substantial increase in new work intakes. There were also reports of strengthening demand from clients based in Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East, Indian manufacturers experienced a robust increase in international sales during July.

The overall rate of expansion was marked and the second-strongest in over 13 years, the survey said.

On the price front, buoyant demand also exerted pressure on prices. Input costs rose at one of the quickest rates in nearly two years, which contributed to the steepest increase in selling prices since October 2013.

Indian manufacturers reported having paid more for coal, leather, packaging, paper, rubber and steel, as per the survey.

—*PTI*

SECOND STRAIGHT INCREASE

ATF price hiked 2%, commercial LPG up ₹6.5 per cylinder

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Rate of cooking gas used in domestic households remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2kg cylinder PHOTO: PTI

Jet fuel, or Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price, on Thursday was hiked 2 per cent and the rate of commercial LPG used by hotels and restaurants by Rs 6.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends.

ATF price was hiked Rs 1,827.34 per kilolitre, or 1.9 per cent, to Rs 97,975.72 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

This is second straight monthly increase in jet fuel rates. ATF prices were on July 1 hiked by 1.2 per cent (Rs 1,179.37 per kl). That increase followed a steep 6.5 per cent (Rs 6,673.87 per kl) reduction effected on June 1.

The ATF rate in Mumbai was increased to Rs 91,650.34 per kl on Thursday from Rs 89,908.31 previously.

Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Alongside, oil firms increased the price of commercial LPG by Rs 6.5 to Rs 1,652.50 per 19-kg cylinder.

The increase follows four monthly price reductions, the last one being that of Rs 30 per cylinder on 1 July. In four price reductions, rates were cut Rs 148 per 19-kg cylinder.

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,605 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,764.50 in Kolkata and Rs 1,817 in Chennai.

Rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2kg cylinder.

—*PTI*

SEBI fines JM Financial Asset Management for flouting rules

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Capital markets watchdog Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed penalty totalling Rs 2 crore on seven entities, including JM Financial Asset Management Ltd, its trustee and its former CEO Bhanu Katoch, for flouting regulatory norms.

Individually, a fine of Rs 25 lakh was levied on JM Financial Asset Management, Rs 10 lakh on JM Financial Trustee Company, Rs 1.1 crore on Bhanu Katoch, Rs 17 lakh on his mother Swarn Lata Katoch and Rs 8 lakh on his wife Sharika Kher. Additionally, the regulator slapped a fine of Rs 22 lakh on Deepen Doshi, who was head of institutional sales at JM Financial Asset Management during the violation, and Rs 9 lakh on his mother Aruna Doshi.

SEBI noted that they invested in certain JM Financial Mutual Fund schemes, holding defaulted Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) securities before the valuation change. —*PTI*

Tyre production down 10% due to natural rubber scarcity

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Production at some tyre plants in India declined 10 per cent in July due to non-availability of natural rubber, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association said on Thursday.

The availability of domestic Natural Rubber (NR) has taken a turn for the worse during the ongoing fiscal.

Against the projected NR production of 60,000 tonnes in June 2024, the actual availability was just about 30,000 tonnes, the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) said in a statement.

"Some tyre plants of ATMA member companies have witnessed production sliding over 10 per cent in July owing to the NR crunch," ATMA Director General Rajiv Budhraja said.

He further said, "Imported NR which can be imported only at two ports is being transported from one plant to the other just to keep the plants running since tyre is a continuous process industry." While tyre companies do anticipate domestic deficits in NR for which imports are being contracted, a certain baseline quantity is expected from the domestic market. The industry has put in large investments to meet the continued pick up in Original Equipment and replacement demand but raw material concerns are likely to play a spoilsport in the manufacturing story as far as the tyre sector is concerned, he added.

—*PTI*

India's power consumption rises 3.5% to 145.40 billion units in July

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

India's power consumption rose a meagre 3.5 per cent to 145.40 Billion Units (BU) in July compared to the year-ago period as rainfall brought down temperatures from the scorching heat.

In July 2023, the power consumption stood at 140.41 BU, according to official data.

The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) also rose to 226.63GW in July 2024 against 208.95 GW in the year-ago month.

The peak power demand touched an all-time high of 250.20 GW in May this year. The previous all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023.

Earlier this year, the power ministry projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during daytime and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024.

The ministry also estimated that peak power demand may hit 260 GW this summer.

Experts said with the onset of the monsoon in the country, the consumers got relief from the scorching heat and humidity which led to lesser use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert coolers.

This led to a decline in power consumption as well as growth in power demand in the country, they pointed out.

However, they opined that the demand for power as well as consumption will be steady in the coming days due to high humidity which makes use of air conditioners inevitable.

—*PTI*

Coal India e-auction revenue falls 7% to ₹5,589cr

KOLKATA, 1 AUG

Coal India reported average realisation from e-auction fell by seven per cent in the first quarter ended June 2024 to Rs 5,589 crore, compared to Rs 6,023 crore registered in the corresponding quarter of last year, due to lower auction prices. The decline in revenue occurred despite a nearly 37 per cent increase in e-auction volume to 23.18 million tonnes. In the same quarter last year, sales were 16.10 million tonnes. E-auction volume and realisation price are key drivers of profitability for the miner. The company commanded an average e-auction rate of Rs 2,411 per tonne, a decline of about 35 per cent from April-June 2023, when it was Rs 3,740 per tonne. —*PTI*

11% RISE IN MALWARE CASES

Ransomeware attacks in India up by 22%

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

India saw a surge in crypto attacks by 409% PHOTO: ETECH

Malware attacks in India rose by 11 per cent while ransomware cyber attacks jumped by 22 per cent in 2024, reflecting the escalating nature of cyber threats for businesses, a report by SonicWall said.

Malware attacks rose by 11 per cent to 13,44,566 in 2024 from 12,13,528 in 2023, the 2024 SonicWall Mid-Year Cyber Threat Report said.

Internet of Things (IOT) attacks went up by 59 per cent in the last one year to 16,80,787 in 2024 from 10,57,320 in 2023, it stated.

While ransomware attacks went up by 22 per cent, India saw a surge in crypto attacks by 409 per cent, the report said.

"Organisations today confront a dynamic threat landscape where threat actors continually innovate to outpace enterprise defenses," SonicWall Vice President, APJ Sales Debasish Mukherjee said.

At least 12.6 per cent of an organization's annual revenues were at risk to cyber threats as businesses endured on average 1,104 hours of critical attacks during a span of 880 working hours, the report said.

Cyber security measures protected businesses from a potential of 46 days of downtime.

The report stated that a total of 78,923 never-before-seen malware variants were identified in the first five months of 2024. "The threat landscape remains complex, with over 500 strains of new variants discovered each day," it said.

Globally, total malware volume rose 30 per cent in the first half of 2024, seeing a massive 92 per cent increase in May alone, it said.

Cryptojacking dropped 60 per cent in most parts of the globe, with the exception of India, it added. —*PTI*

97.92% of ₹2,000 notes returned, says RBI

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

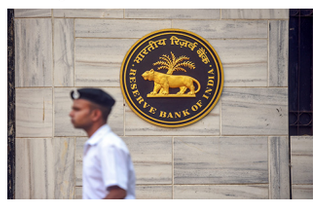


PHOTO: PTI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said 97.92 per cent of the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes have returned to the banking system, and only Rs 7,409 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public.

On 19 May, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on 19 May, 2023, when the withdrawal was announced, has declined to Rs 7,409 crore at the close of business on July 31, 2024.

"Thus, 97.92 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation as on 19 May, 2023, has since been returned," the central bank said in a statement.

The facility for deposit and/or exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country till 7 October, 2023.

The facility for the exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes has been available at the 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank since 19 May, 2023.

—*PTI*

Rafael Nadal
PHOTO: X/@TENNISLOLS

NADAL UNCERTAIN ABOUT HIS FUTURE

PARIS, 1 AUG

When it was over, when Rafael Nadal's Paris Games — and his Olympic career — ended with a doubles loss in a stadium central to his legacy because it hosts the French Open, which he's won a record 14 times, he soaked in the applause accompanying his exit from the red clay.

Was this 6-2, 6-4 defeat alongside Carlos Alcaraz to the fourth-seeded American duo of Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram actually Nadal's last match at Roland Garros? Let's let Nadal answer: "Maybe," he said later in the evening. "I don't know." Was it his last match anywhere? No way for anyone to be sure if he himself isn't. After collecting his equipment from the sideline, the 38-year-old Spaniard looked around the place that has meant so much to him during his time in tennis and waved to the spectators, who were bidding adieu with the latest in a series of standing ovations for him during these Olympics. *—AP*

BEND IT LIKE LAKSHYA

Sen beats Prannoy 21-12, 21-6 in straight games

PARIS, 1 AUG

India's Lakshya Sen registered a comfortable straight-game win over compatriot HS Prannoy to become only the third male player ever from the country to reach the quarterfinals of the Olympics badminton competition here on Thursday.

The 22-year-old from Almora, a reigning Commonwealth Games champion and a 2021 World Championships bronze-medallist, looked in complete control as he notched up a 21-12 21-6 win over world no. 13 Prannoy in a 39-minute pre-quarterfinal clash.

Sen joined Parupalli Kashyap and Kidambi Srikanth, who had reached the quarterfinals in the London and Rio edition of the Olympic Games in 2012 and 2016 respectively.

Currently ranked 22, Sen will face 12th seed Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen in the quarterfinals. "I think having tough matches gives you confidence. I am now ready to go deep into the tournament. It will be a tricky match against Chou, I have to go and recover well and give my 100 per cent," Sen said after the match.

Sen was steady in his defense and mixed his attack well, while Prannoy, who played a three-game match last evening, looked tired and didn't show much resistance during the 39-minute contest. *—PTI*

Lakshya Sen returns to HS Prannoy during the men's singles Round of 16 match on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

QR-Code payments: Paris yet to decode UPI method

PARIS, 1 AUG

The information desk official at the Eiffel Tower, the iconic engineering marvel, refused to accept UPI or the QR-code mode of payment. The UPI was introduced in Paris in February this year with an aim to allow Indians to buy tickets to visit the iconic tower without having to worry about currency exchange rates or carrying large amounts of foreign currency. *—PTI*

KEY EVENTS

SHOOTING | TIME: 12:30 PM

SKEET MEN, QUALIFICATION DAY 1

Anantjeet Singh Naruka, 24, Rajasthan

Naruka qualified for the 2023 Asian Games in individual and team men's skeet. He won a silver medal in men's skeet with a score of 58/60.

GOLF | TIME: 12:30 PM

MEN'S INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY, ROUND 2

Shubhankar Sharma, 28, Jammu Kashmir

Sharma placed third in the Bashundhara Bangladesh Open, tied for fourth in the Resorts World Manila Masters, and finished 51st in the Order of Merit.

Gaganjeet Bhullar, 36, Punjab

Bhullar finished fifth at the Kenya Open for his best result of the season.

ARCHERY | TIME: 1.19 PM

MIXED TEAM, 1/8 ELIMINATION ROUND, INDIA VS INDONESIA

Dhiraj Bommadevara, 22, Andhar Pradesh

He won a bronze medal in the Men's event at the World Cups in Guatemala City, Guatemala, and France.

Ankita Bhakat, 26, Kolkata

She competed in the 2017 World Archery Youth Championships held at Rosario, Argentina, and won the gold medal in the recurve junior mixed team event.

JUDO | TIME: 02:12 PM

WOMEN +78 KG, ELIMINATION ROUND OF 32, INDIA VS CUBA

Tulika Maan, 25, Delhi

Bronze medallist at the Asian Open Championship in Taipei.

SHOOTING | TIME: 03: 30

25M PISTOL WOMEN, QUALIFICATION RAPID

Esha Singh, 19, Hyderabad

She became the youngest national champion in the 10 meter air pistol in 2018 at the age of 13.

Manu Bhaker, 22, Harayana

2 times Bronze medalist will look to win the 3rd medal in her bag.

HOCKEY | TIME: 4:45 PM

MEN'S, GROUP B, AUSTRALIA VS INDIA

India has won 29 official international titles.

ATHLETICS | TIME: 9:40 PM

WOMEN'S 5000M, ROUND 1

Ankita Dhyani, 22, Uttarakhand

She won gold in 1500m and 5000m at the Khelo India Youth Games at Guwahati.

Parul Chaudhary, 29, Uttar Pradesh

At the Hangzhou Asian Games in October 2023, she claimed gold in the 5000 m event and silver in the 3000 m steeplechase.

AMEN'S SHOT PUT | TIME: 11:40 PM

QUALIFICATION ROUND

Tajinderpal Singh Toor, 29, Punjab

A DULL DAY FOR INDIANS

Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy; Nikhat Zareen (in blue); Pravin Jadhav fail to qualify ***PHOTOS: PTI***

PARIS, 1 AUG

Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's dreams of securing a maiden Olympic medal came crashing down after a heartbreaking three-game loss to Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia in the men's doubles quarterfinals at the Paris Games here on Thursday.

One of the favourites for the gold medal, Satwik and Chirag, the reigning Asian Games champions and Commonwealth Games winners, squandered a first-game advantage to go down 21-13 14-21 16-21 in a hard-fought quarterfinal against the world number 3 Malaysians.

In one of the biggest upsets of the Olympic Games boxing competition, two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg) bowed out after a 0-5 loss to Asian Games gold medallist Wu Yu, completely outmanoeuvred by the Chinese in a stunningly lopsided bout here on Thursday. "Sorry guys," an emotional Nikhat said after the loss.

Surprisingly, the Indian hockey team also suffered its first loss of the Olympic Games here, going down 1-2 to defending champions Belgium after letting slip a one goal lead in a pool match here.

Veteran India custodian PR Sreejesh, playing his last international tournament, stood like a rock in front of the goal.

However, it was Belgium which had the first chance in the form of a penalty corner in the eighth minute but Sreejesh made a terrific save to deny Alexander Hendrickx. However, both India and Belgium have already qualified for the quarterfinals from Pool B.

National record holder Priyanka Goswami finished a poor 41st in the women's 20km competition while Vikash Singh and Paramjeet Singh ended at lowly 30th and 37th positions respectively in the men's event as Indian race walkers produced a disappointing performance at the event.

Indian archer Pravin Jadhav also bowed out of the tournament after losing his individual men's recurve opening round clash in straight sets to Kao Wenchao of China here. Jhadhav lost 0-6 (28-29 29-30 27-28) in the round of 64.

Diksha shows courage

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar, who is due to take part in the the Olympics, was involved in an accident but is doing fine and will compete in her event as planned. *—PTI*

Arg, China grab Gold in BMX Freestyle

PARIS, 1 AUG

First-time Olympians from Argentina and China took gold in the BMX Freestyle finals as a string of dramatic crashes knocked out the reigning medallists under a baking-hot Paris sun.

In his first Olympic games, Argentina's Jose Torres Gil, 29, shot off the ramp in his first run, flying higher and gyrating faster than all competitors, his 94.82 score remaining at the top of the scoreboard throughout the event on Wednesday.

China's Deng Yawen, 18, also a first-time Olympian, won the women's gold medal, the result of a decade-old drive by China to boost its medals count in sports the communist country has not previously dominated. The jury awarded Deng's first run a score of 92.60 for a series of high-flying tricks, including her trademark "double tailwhip", during which she kicks her legs back and forth as if cycling in the air while her bike spins around underneath her.

However, Iga Swiatek lost to Zheng Qinwen of China 6-2, 7-5 in the Paris Olympics semi-finals Thursday, a surprising setback for the No. 1-ranked woman and champion at the French Open four of the past five years. The result was hard to predict for several reasons. Swiatek entered the day with a 6-0 edge in their head-to-head matchups.

She has led the WTA rankings for nearly every week since April 2022, while Zheng is No. 7. Plus, just when Swiatek appeared to be getting back into the match with a 4-0 lead in the second set, she faltered. The 23-year-old from Poland has been dominant at Roland Garros, the facility used for the annual French Open and the site for tennis during these Summer Games. *—Al Jazeera/AP*

COUNTRIES				
1. China	11	7	4	22
2. France	8	11	8	27
3. Japan	8	3	4	15
4. Aus	7	6	4	17
48. India	0	0	3	3

Jose Torres Gill ***PHOTO: X***

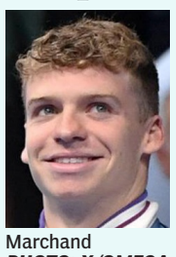
Marchand, Ledecky make history on epic night in pool

PARIS, 1 JULY

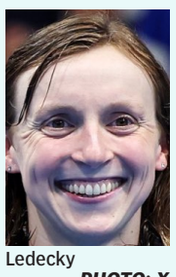
In the space of about two hours Wednesday night, Marchand won gold medals using two very different strokes, both times with the defending champion from the Tokyo Games in the lane next to him.

If there's anyone who can appreciate the magnitude of what Léon Marchand has done at the Paris Olympics, it's Bob Bowman. In the space of about two hours Wednesday night, Marchand won gold medals using two very different strokes, both times with the defending champion from the Tokyo Games in the lane next to him. "The way he handled it, his attitude about it, was amazing," Bowman said.

Also, Katie Ledecky blitzed the field to retain her 1,500 metres freestyle title at the Paris Olympics, the American iron woman securing a record-equalling eighth gold medal in the sport. *—AP*



Marchand ***PHOTO: X/OMEGA***



Ledecky ***PHOTO: X***

PHOTO: X/@GAEKY

Ex-India cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad cremated

VADODARA, 1 AUG

Former India cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad was cremated in Vadodara city of Gujarat on Thursday afternoon. The last rites were performed at Kirti Mandir in the presence of his family members and prominent personalities from sports, politics and other fields. Gaekwad, who served Indian cricket as a player, coach and selector, succumbed to blood cancer at a private hospital in Vadodara at age of 71. ***—PTI***

Morgan backs McCullum for Eng white-ball coach

LONDON, 1 AUG

Ex-England World Cup-winning skipper backed Test head coach Brendon McCullum to take up the Three Lions' white-ball coach role following the exit of Matthew Mott. On Tuesday, Mott stepped down from the position of England's white-ball head coach after spending two years with the Three Lions. England Cricket Board confirmed that Mott has stepped down from his role. ***—ANI***

The 57-year-old Jonathan Wheatley has been at Red Bull for 18 years
PHOTO: X/@REDBULLRACING

Wheatley to leave Red Bull for Audi team principal job

LONDON, 1 AUG

Red Bull say Jonathan Wheatley is to leave his role as sporting director to become Audi's Formula 1 team principal.

The 57-year-old Briton has been at Red Bull for 18 years and will stay until the end of this season. He will have a period of 'gardening leave' in 2025 before joining the German manufacturer at an unspecified future date.

Audi has taken over the Swiss-based Sauber team and will officially enter F1 with its own car and engine in 2026. Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said Wheatley's "contribution to six world constructors' titles and seven world drivers' championships, first as team manager and latterly sporting director, will forever be a marker in our team history".

Wheatley was not quoted in the Red Bull statement, which said that a new structure would be announced at a later date. Red Bull's announcment appeared to catch Audi by surprise. An Audi spokesperson was not immediately able to confirm the move. Wheatley was unavailable.

News of Wheatley's move comes a week after Audi named former Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto as chief operating and technical officer, replacing Andrea Seidl and Oliver Hoffmann.

Audi's move for Wheatley marks an opportunity for career progression, which he has said he has wanted for some time. *—BBC News*

Jonathan Wheatley
PHOTO: X/@REDBULLRACING

It's time to move on from WC: Rohit

COLOMBO, 1 AUG

- Rohit's side has started a new journey under Gambhir with the ongoing white ball series against Sri Lanka and the season ahead has some top-of-the-shelf tournaments

India skipper Rohit Sharma said it's time to move on from the euphoria of the T20 World Cup victory as he looked forward to continuing the success under new head coach Gautam Gambhir in a season full of challenging assignments.

Rohit's side has started a new journey under Gambhir with the ongoing white ball series against Sri Lanka and the season ahead has some top-of-the-shelf tournaments, including the Champions Trophy early next year.

The Gautam Gambhir-led Indian team management has an opportunity to decide who among KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant will be India's long-term first-choice wicketkeeper-batter in ODIs when the side takes on Sri Lanka in a three-match series beginning here on Friday.

Since the continental showpiece last year, Rahul has made 834 runs from 21 matches at a fine average of 69.50 with two hundreds. Besides, Rahul also captained India in the ODI series against South Africa earlier this year Pant's return to India fold through a clutch of T20Is after that horrific accident in 2022 has been heartwarming but he has not set the field ablaze with his outings.

If Gambhir and skipper Rohit decide to keep both Rahul and Pant in the 11, then they will have to think as to how to accommodate Shreyas Iyer, another formidable player in the 50-over version. *—PTI*

Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma in practice session ***PHOTO: PTI***

S2 OF GLOBAL CHESS

Praggu, Nodirbeck, Arjun join Superstar men

LONDON, 1 AUGUST

R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Nodirbek Abdusattorov will join Magnus Carlsen and Viswanathan Anand in the Superstar Men line-up during the second season of the Global Chess League, a Fide-rated tournament, to be held here between from October 3 to 12.

US Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura and10th-ranked Wei Yi will also be a part of the Superstar Men, along with Vidit Gujrathi, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Richard Rapport, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Teimour Radjabov, Alexander Grischuk, Parham Maghsoodloo and Vladislav Artemiev.

US Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura and 10th-ranked Wei Yi will also be a part of the Superstar Men with others ***PHOTO: ANI***

"I am thrilled to be back for the second season of the Global Chess League. The inaugural season was a remarkable learning experience as I got to play alongside Magnus Carlsen and other top players," Praggnanandhaa said in a release.

Meanwhile, Nodirbek noted, "The roster of players is incredibly strong, and the format challenges players and teams alike. I am looking forward to another memorable outing with my team in the Global Chess League."

In the tournament, each team will play 10 games in a double round-robin format, with the winner of each contest being determined in a best-of-six board scoring system. *—PTI*